1: Kruger M-5 (ca. 1930)1936 FX14 Lovedu FX14

ing. It is said that this was the first miracle of that chief, for in Mashonaland his brother had produced the rainfall.

12. The name of the first chief who left Mashonaland is Magaphele. It was he who took possession of the country of Kheoga by fighting with fire. The second chief is Mohale. There is not much known about him.

13. The third chief is "Kheale kha Mmamohhale a Leḍaža."[17] This is his praise-name. He produced rainfall just like his fore-fathers.

14. The fourth chief is "Phedola-Khefhedola-Maru-a—ḍaža."[18] This is his praise-name. They praise them on account of the clouds, they say: "They transform the clouds so that the rain must fall."

15. He—Phedola—had a son who was the first-born[19] When the king was about to die, he gave the younger son the rain-horn. But the people did not know that the chief had given him the horn of chieftainship. They thought that they would find that he who had the great name of chieftainship[20] would be he who had received the rain-horn. The name of the eldest son was "Maḍaže" (the Filler) that of the younger one was Makhoba (the Finisher). Therefore they said: "Chief is Maḍaže! He will fill the rivers with rain-water. As to Makhoba that means he will empty the rivers, so that we shall have no water." Therefore they proclaimed Maḍaže their chief.

16. They drove the younger brother away so that he had to leave the Lovedu-country. He left together with the troop which trusted in him. He went upwards and came to "Nareni"[21] and settled on the mountain of Khevela.[22]

17. Now in Loveduland Maḍaže was not able to produce rainfall. That country was a country of sunshine and hunger without intermission. There at Khevela rain was falling continuously every year; it was a country of corn, for the rain was falling.

18. Then the head-men of Loveduland began to cry and to complain that they did not know that it was Makhoba who had been given the rain-

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[17] Unknown names

[18] "Transformer—clouds are filled."

[19] —and therefore heir to the Crown according to the law.

[20] See [19]

[21] "At the Buffalo" name of the country in the South of Loveduland from the name of the tribes living there. They praise the buffalo.

[22] Near the confluence of the Selati-and Olifant-river.

1: Kruger M-5 (ca. 1930) 1936 FX14 Lovedu FX14

horn. And they planned to call him to return home and to become chief. So they sent some of them to ask him to return to Loveduland, to come and to be chief.

19. He refused and said: "You have driven me away, I can never return." Then they urged him. But he said: "How can I go? My elder brother will kill me." They said: "We shall make plans to drive him away." Then he agreed and left with them. When they came to "Nareni ha Lezwalô"[23] they left him there.

20. They however—for they wanted to hide the facts to chief Maḏaže—when they arrived in the village of Loveduland, went to the chief and said: "Know! your brother Makhoba left with warriors, he wants to kill you, he is on the road, he is coming! Flee! Go away that he may not find you." Chief Maḏaže said: "How can I go away? The young men will fight for me, I shall defeat them." They however pressed him. They said: "He comes with many spears, we shall fail. Go away, Chief, hide yourself, that, when we are fighting with them, even if they beat us, they cannot kill you." But the chief refused.

21. Then some of the head-men went back, they called chief Makhoba that he might approach. When he was near, they returned again to chief Maḏaže and informed him that he was coming to-day, that he was near: "Go away, hide yourself that, when we are fighting with them, they may not kill you." Then chief Maḏaže agreed. He left his village and abode in a thicket. During the night chief Makhoba entered the village. The head-men went to tell their chief: "Your younger brother entered the village with an army. He will seek you with rage, rise! we shall lead you away thither to the mountain of Levaga.[24]

22. Then the chief moved off and went to that mountain. On the road to go to Levaga there was a river called Moḏazwi.[25] It was not allowed for the chiefs to cross that river. Whenever a chief crossed it, he was no longer able to rule over the tribe. He will be ruined by crossing that river. Now it happened when he just had crossed, that they said: "Know! as you have crossed the river which may not be crossed by the chief, you cannot be our chief anymore.

23. They left him there and went home; they were governed by chief Makhoba. They gave him the name of his ancestor "Phedola-

[23] A "buffalo"-tribe living near the Letaba-river.
[24] In the North of Loveduland.
[25] In the North of Loveduland.

1: Kruger M-5 (ca. 1930)1936 FX14 Lovedu FX14

Khefhedola-Maru-a-ɗaža." He ruled the country, he made the rain fall like his father. The people loved him much on account of the rain. 173

24. Towards the end of his rule he had a son. This son—he made him live just as an orphan, he hated him and treated him as a thief. He did so especially for the reason that the people should not perceive that the chief wanted to give him his chieftainship. That child had a house erected far from the village, he dwelt there. When he wanted to go home, he did not enter by the main-entrance. His father had made a small path for him unknown to every body; furthermore when the child happened to come amidst other people on that road, the chief prevented him from entering. The name of that child was "Mogôdô, the cast-out, Mogôdô the neck with fat-wrinkles, or the resting-place for property and men,[26] or Mogôdô-Mme-a Phedola-Khefhedola-Maru-a-ɗaža."

25. These praises were widely spread during his chieftainship. He was a powerful chief of severe government, for he used to kill people. He killed sorcerers and adulterers and people who were found telling lies, When judging he liked to pass sentences of death. Some were strangled. others were ordered to be burdened with stones and drowned in a deep place in the river.

26. Furthermore Mogôdô was a clever man in his undertakings. That what still to-day is to be seen of his clever undertakings is the stone-work which he erected with great skill. In the country there are no buildings which are similar to his. Among these buildings there is to be found a stone-seat which is beautifully carved. It was the seat of chief Mogôdô, when he was basking in the sun. It surprises really, it was hewn out with great skill. On that place there was the chief-kraal, its name is Levyeni.[27] (Others say that those buildings have been erected by Kheale, the ancestor of Mogôdô). 173 643 324

27. In the days of chief Mogôdô two of his head-men quarrelled about their territories. Therefore the chief sent his young men to stop the quarrel; they however found that war had broken out. So they returned home to inform the chief. Now the chief set out himself. When he arrived at the mountain of Mmanopi[28] he divided his army into two divisions to surround the villages of those head-men. When they saw that the chief had come to fight with them they were afraid that they would be killed. So they submitted to their lord. They offered two 173 643

[26] Property and men have space in the wrinkles of his neck.
[27] "At the rock."
[28] In the East.

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girls and asked that the chief might pardon them this trespass. Then the chief sounded the horn to assemble his troups. When the troups had assembled on one place, they were told that it was finished. Now the chief seized his war-horn, blew it and jumped about. All the troups intonated praise-songs to praise the chief; they said: "Mogôdô, the neck with fat-wrinkles, Mogôdô, he rules with the rain-horn." It is 'Mogôdô-Mme-a—Phedola," he says: 'I kill a person'—he kills; he says; 'I make live'—he makes live."

28. Then the chief took his spear, danced, pushed it into the ground and pointed to the East. He said to his warriors: "From the East there are coming black ants. You will fight with them, and you will defeat them." Then he pushed down again, pointed to the West and said: "From the West there will come red ants, these will defeat you over and over again."[29]

29. Chief Mogôdô fought also with Khašane, the son of his father. But Khašane fled into the country called Tshale.[30] Then the people called him to come and stay in another country called Moduveni,[31] where a certain man namely Mamadêba, a son of Khašane grew up, who found the Word of God at Port Elizabeth, who was found fighting against the darkness in the days of Rev. Knothe and Reuter.[32] He was killed by the second female chief Masalanavô for the sake of the Gospel.

30. Mogôdô had two sons. When they quarrelled about the chieftainship of their father, the chieftainship was given his daughter who became the first female chief Možaži. The brothers were driven out of the country by the magic power of the little calabash[33] and the fire-stick[34] which had been strengthened with medicines of driving people out of the country.

31. So Možaži became chief, she was a good ruler over the country Lovedu like her father. She also killed the wrong-doers namely the sorcerers and thieves and liars. She produced rainfall like her father, she received homages of chiefs who came from far with treasures of different kinds and elephant-tusks—coming from Zululand, Sekhukhuni, Ramabulana[35] and *N*guṅgunyane.[36]

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[29] A prophecy attributed also to the chief Sekhukhuni.
[30] In the West.
[31] In the West.
[32] Missionaries among the *Golové*.
[33] The holy vessels of the tribe.
[34] The holy vessels of the tribe.
[35] In Vendaland.
[36] In Thongaland.

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32. Therefore the praise-song of chief Možaži says: "Možaži—when the sun sets—trader in the hut;[37] I sleep on the road,[38] I am a widow,[39] I have no one who watches me. I am the elephant-knife on the hip in the sheath;[40] she eats meat,[41] the trader in the house." 173 643

33. The second chief was Masala-Navô. She was given this name by the dead (queen), when she was raised to the throne. She governed also like the other chiefs. Her praise-song says: "Mmasala-Navô,[42] speak good (words). When you are speaking bad (words), the tribe will split. It was the chief Khethubudi of Mashonaland who said: "I do not like the people.—Finally I got an ulcer on my back and said: 'People, scratch me.'[43]—The hawk, at which they look with fear, they look at me with hearts full of hatred."[44]

34. This queen had milk-cows. They were called "the selected" of the chief-kraal. They were milked by a head-man who had been chosen to milk them. When they were milked, and the carrier of the milk was carrying it to bring it home—when it happened that he met people, they had to kneel down until he had passed. This was a custom to honour the food of the chief. When a person was standing when the milk passed near him, it was a great crime. These cows were not kept in one kraal together with the cattle of the village, but they remained separated. 173 234 643

35. Furthermore chief Mmasala-Navô hated the believers (in Christ). A Christian was not allowed to enter the chief's kraal. When a Christian had a case to be settled in the chief's Court, he had to sit outside the village under a tree; he sent his words through the messenger of the chief. 173 797

36. Chief Khesêthwane who governs to-day, and who is also called Možaži, is the third female chief. She produces rainfall. She allows the Christians to enter the official meeting-place and her village. She is fond of education. A church has been built near the meeting-place of 175 797

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[37] It is not necessary that she goes round to "sell" the rain. People are coming to her to buy in her hut.

[38] Like a prostitute (?)—she was not married but is said to have had many lovers.

[39] Because she had no husband.

[40] Praise of her blood-thirstiness.

[41] She killed her chief counsellor always after a short service.

[42] "She who remains with them."

[43] That chief thought that he was able to live without needing other people, until he became ill and was unable to help himself. Then he was obliged to call for assistance.

[44] Praise of the cruelty of the Queen.

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the royal kraal. The children of the chief's kraal are attending school at her command.

37. Chief Khesêthwane does not allow that a person enters her kraal with shoes on his feet. When somebody approaches the main entrance, he must take off the shoes and leave them outside the main-entrance that he may be allowed to enter the meeting-place.

The beginning of the government of female chiefs in Loveduland

1. The last male chief is Mogôdô. He had two sons : Malegudu and Kheêbe. These young men quarrelled about the chieftainship of their father when he was still alive. Now they had a sister who was called Možaži. So the chieftainship was given her that she might be the ruler of the tribe. The brothers were driven away.

2. When a person is made chief in Loveduland, he must be given the fire-stick and the water-calabash. Now they gave the sister the fire-stick and the calabash that she might bring it to Malegudu, the elder brother. But it is said that they had been strengthened by magic charms which make a person mad who looks at them with his eyes. He will behave like a mad person, he will leave his home, go away and move to another country and dwell there.

3. They say when Malegudu had looked at the fire-stick and the calabash, he left the land of his father, went to Vendaland and died there. Kheêbe the younger son who had quarrelled with him about the chieftainship was treated in the same way as the elder one. He left the country went to Thôvôlô[45] and died there.

4. So the chieftainship was given the daughter of Mogôdô namely Možaži I. She had a daughter called Masala-Navô. She followed her mother in the chieftainship.

5. Masala-Navô had no child until her old age. But she had a younger sister. She had two children. The first child was a boy, the second one a girl. The girl-child called Khesêthwane was chosen to be chief. She is Možaži who governs still to-day.

[45] In Portuguese-East-Africa.

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FOREWORD

I AM interested in this book for two reasons. The first is that the 114
authors are my nephew and his wife—both devoted anthropologists, to whom this painstaking research into the least known of our South African native tribes has been a real labour of love. While earth's foundations were shaking in the convulsion of our times they were absorbedly probing into the mysteries of the Rain-Queen and her 'timeless' society. To me this seemed an almost unnatural devotion to science—until I came to read the MS. of this book and found it a fascinating distraction to the war problems which form my daily life. Perhaps the curious reader may find it no less entertaining.

The second reason is that for at least half a century the Rain-Queen 643
and her people and the curious stories about them have interested me. She was said to be very light coloured: was she a descendant of one of a couple of Boer girls who were said to have been spared by those natives, when early in the nineteenth century they massacred the Van Rensburg party without leaving a trace behind? What was the mystery about her which made it almost impossible for Europeans to catch a glimpse of her? Had the Natives adopted a white queen as something divine? Even if these were mere baseless fancies, other points of personal interest attracted me to the subject of the queen. Long ago one of my daughters, when a college girl, visited the country of the queen with a company of friends in the hope that they might be able to see her. In that mountainous, almost roadless country the party was overtaken by a violent rainstorm and late at night arrived at her headquarters drenched, exhausted, and more dead than alive. The queen ordered a hut to be cleaned and prepared for them where they stayed the night; and next day, having probably heard that she was the Prime Minister's daughter, gave a personal audience to her. Imagine the thrill! That established a personal bond between the queen and my wife, suitably recognized in the customary South African way. Then many years after, my nephew and his wife were staying at the headquarters of the queen in order to gather the material for this book. From time to time they informed me of the most interesting anthropological finds they were making. I also learnt that near her headquarters was a forest of cycads (*Encephalartos transvenosus Burtt-Davy*), one of the most unique botanical features in South Africa. [137]
This decided me at last to spend a holiday in the queen's country, and, with my relatives as guides, I had a most interesting experience. I saw how they had, through simple humanness, overcome the fears and the shyness of the people and were on most familiar terms both with the queen and her subjects. I saw my cycad forest. Best of all, I saw that wonderful woman, well over sixty, but strong in body and character—every inch a queen. We exchanged information and gifts in the traditional style, and I could thank her for her kindness to my daughter in the distant past. She was much taken up with all the useful domestic articles my wife had sent her. A couple of years afterwards I was once

J [i.e. J.C. Smuts--Ed.]

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643 more Prime Minister, and I received a most charming letter from her, expressing her pleasure that she had met and personally knew the man who was 'wearing the crown of South Africa'. Accepting the complimentary expression so kindly meant, I was equally pleased to have met a woman who so impressed me with her force of character and intangible air of authority—a woman who really was a queen. No wonder her subjects look upon her as the embodiment of their divine order. And yet that woman is the centre—in the ritual of her tribe—of a great tragedy which awaits her, as it has awaited her predecessors. That ritual carries us back to the most dim and distant past of the human race, and the interested reader will find it in this book. Mujaji is one of the high lights of anthropology, and, looking at her calm, strong face, I wondered what she thought of the fate in store for her. Here are the tears in things mortal.

114 This book is interesting from another point of view. It paints the picture of a Native society in which the pattern or plan of the whole determines the character of all the main lines of detail. Religion, law, ethics, social institutions, all fit naturally and almost logically into the scheme as a whole—they appear to be products of the central pattern which has stamped its character on all the details. The social sanctions in law, religion, ethics, &c., are not external and superimposed on the social practice, but flow from the fundamental social system itself as its natural outcome. All are in one degree or another internal to the system. The writers of this study have succeeded in penetrating to this inner core of this particular type of Native society, and in showing the balance and harmony of the system as a whole. This gives, in my opinion, a very special anthropological value to this study.

They have no doubt been able to probe thus deeply into this Native society because of the sympathetic relations they have been able to establish with the Natives. The first task of the anthropological field-worker, that of gaining the confidence of the Native, is more difficult than is generally supposed. As those who know the Native mind realize, it requires qualities of tact, patience, and sympathy of the highest order. This task presents unusual difficulties among the people of Mujaji, whose suave and accommodating manners can be most effectively used to frustrate the quest of the field-worker. And if there is one thing about which they are persistent, it is the safeguarding of their secrets. The tenacity with which they keep these secrets is intelligible, for they attach as great importance to the mystery supporting the powers of their queen as an army commander to the strategy which will ensure the success of his campaign. The queen is rain-maker *par excellence* of South Africa, and to maintain that position her secret weapon must never be divulged. Moreover, intimately linked with the preservation of her powers are many of the constituent parts of the whole tribal structure. All the major institutional arrangements in some way subserve the grand purpose of making her the divine 'transformer of the clouds'. Since the foundations as well as the superstructure of the culture are interlocked with this purpose and are psychologically necessary, as the authors show, for sustaining men's faith in the Rain-Queen's role, investigations even into

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PREFACE

121 ●643 This book presents the life and culture of the Lovedu, a Bantu tribe in South Africa. Its central figure is a sacred queen. Against the background of our world, she no doubt appears unreal in some respects, like the baseless fabric of a dream, but in others she is real enough. We can, for instance, readily visualize her, without official husband to cramp her authority, bearing her successor by a secret consort; or maintaining her strategic position at the centre of the tribe by re-distributing as favours the wives she receives as tribute. But it is a different and far more difficult matter to depict as real what we regard as mysterious; for, hallowed by a heritage of incest, she is chosen for her role by the ghost of her predecessor, and her destined end is death by her own hands, in order that she may rule by divine right. We have tried to show that these mysteries become realities when we see them as means to the supreme end of consecrating her power to make rain, and when we realize that this power implies control of half the cosmic forces and gives men faith to do their daily tasks.

121 182 Our main object has been to describe the culture of the Lovedu. We have set ourselves the task of showing the nature of its parts and their relation to one another. Some space is devoted to the royal institutions; the network of links woven by kinship, marriage and marriage cattle; the legal procedure of compromise and appeasement; and various aspects of magic, witchcraft, and religion. Considered as a whole, the culture emerges as a structure supporting and in turn supported by the Rain-Queen. We may think of the royal institutions as the foundations upon which men build for safety against famines and foes; the culture dispenses with reliance upon garden magic for success of the crops and upon a military system for national defence. Marriage cattle and the kin can be regarded as forging a frame which firmly holds the society together, binding its families, foreign groups and territorial units to one another and to the queen. Stresses and strains are taken by flexible devices for adjusting disputes by conciliation. A cult of masks and man-made mysteries appears to surmount the edifice like spires and pinnacles; we may envisage it as the cultural handling of those enigmas of nature, the exalted themes of growth and fertility.

Next, we have tried to outline the attitudes and interests of the people. They appear as carriers of the culture oriented toward the central figure and helping one another to bear the burden of a timeless society. Our chief concern has been to show how their ideals and motives have been moulded by the culture; why, for instance, they frown upon competition and appraise moderation, and how it is that they are not troubled by sex-guilt or inferiority complexes. We have finally turned to consider some aspects of culture contact, such as the fear and distrust of the agents of an acquisitive society against whom the carriers of the culture have no weapons save secrecy and deception.

In describing these lineaments of Lovedu society, as its stands facing the onslaught of Western civilization, we have set forth the general

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CHAPTER I

PAGEANTS OF THE PAST

Fame of Mujaji transformer of the clouds—the cycle of the kings—the cycle of the queens—from the pageants to the people.

FAME OF MUJAJI, TRANSFORMER OF THE CLOUDS

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THE Lovedu are not numerous and, from a military point of view, they are insignificant. Yet among their neighbours and among tribes as far away as the Zulu they have a great reputation. The fame of their queen, Mujaji, is spoken of even by white men as if it were the fame of the monarch of a mighty empire. That is doubly curious. For, on the one hand, the nineteenth century in the southern sub-continent of Africa opens with the Napoleonic career of Chaka, king of the Zulu, whose exploits, followed by great displacements of peoples and spectacular reconstructions of tribes, overshadow everything else. On the other hand, the Lovedu, at the end of the century, ignominously surrendered to the European without a shot being fired.

Upon what basis has Mujaji, queen of an obscure tribe in the far north-eastern corner of the Transvaal, built her fame? By 1800 the kingdom of the Lovedu had already existed for two centuries in the seclusion of the sheltering foothills of the Drakensberg. It was undistinguished among its far mightier neighbours, the Venda, the Pedi, and even the Ḍɔkwa. A mere glance at the map shows their insignificance beside the overwhelming masses of Shangana-Tonga, now almost completely encircling them. They were too microscopic even to be seen on the stage of the sub-continent, when mighty empires succumbed and new nations were born. Nevertheless, it was amid these convulsions, even as a challenge to them, that the kingdom of the Mujajis arose to prominence. The Lovedu kings had always been sacred kings; they had a reputation for rain-making, but it was no unique reputation, shared as it was by several of their neighbours. Among the Lilliputian tribes who had penetrated the geographical barriers isolating the Lovedu lowveld—the tsetse-fly belt east and north along the enveloping curve of the Limpopo, the Drakensberg on the south and the escarpment on the west—the Lovedu could claim precedence and ascendancy. But if the Zulu legions or any one of the pillaging hordes which their ravages had set into motion had violated the sanctuary of Vuloyedu, little would have survived of the Mujajis.

To the Zulu, so we are told by Bryant, their historian, Mujaji was the greatest magician of the north. Queen of locusts and of drought, a four-breasted marvel, her name struck terror in the hearts of would-be enemies, and her fame surpassed that even of Mantatisi, the ferocious female tyrant who was leading the Kololo (Tɔkwa) and laid the foundations of the Rotse empire. Mujaji also it was who magically smote to death dread Zwide, fleeing from Chaka, when he came too near Vuloyedu, even though it was appeasement, not conquest, that he sought. According to

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Bryant, Mujaji was conceived to be immortal, inaccessible, mysterious. That is a fair reflection of the opinion held both by her neighbours and by peoples living far from her domain. Even to her own people she was practically inaccessible, appearing but seldom before them; but she was not immortal, and her mystery, if what is natural and inevitable be mysterious, was the mystic power of transforming the clouds into rain. To this central conception the name Vulovedu (or Lovedu) bears witness. It is interpreted to mean the country where the cattle and the wealth, even the sisters and the daughters, of foreign chiefs are utterly lost (*hu lova*); they are the offerings for rain which, by accruing to Mujaji, 'waste' the substance of the suppliants. That is the simple secret, out of which the colourful phantasy of the mystery of Mujaji has been elaborated. But it is more than a simple matter. The ancestors of Mujaji also were rain-makers; but they were kings, not queens. If it was the feminine attributes of the ruler which made Mujaji famous among her neighbours, it was, however, the fairness of her skin which captured the imagination of the early European pioneers.

There was enough in the environment itself to lend colour to the picture. The mist-covered mountains are an appropriate setting for the mysterious Mujaji, 'Transformer of the Clouds' (*Khifidula-maru-a-Daja*), for such is her great praise. You can watch from afar how those vapour-laden clouds roll over the hills, constrained, as it were, to pour out their life-giving rain. You can easily imagine the 'huckster in her hut' (*mushava-ndoni*) where it nestles, secreted in the bush, on the edge of a precipice, and from which she sells her rain-making magic. It is well known that there are others who claim the power to constrain the heavens, and it is curious that the greatest among them are or have been women; but by comparison with Mujaji they are mere amateurs, even dabblers and quacks, trespassing upon her prerogative. They can raise storms and send hurricanes, but they do not have the power to withhold rain from the undeserving or to drop it gently upon the deserving with mathematical precision.

If these things appealed to the Native mind, the European was not unimpressed by the babbling of the streams mingling with the sounding of the drums, by the forest-clad ravines that are sanctuaries of ancestral spirits, and by the grotesque kopjes standing out as sentinels guarding the seclusion of savage men. The gateway to Vulovedu is the Valley of the Devils (Duivelskloof), a name which reflects the reaction of the pioneers to what was regarded as uncanny. But it was particularly the observances and ceremonial requiring the seclusion of the queen, thereby shielding her from the public eye, restraining her movements and preserving unsullied the secrets of her power, which fired the imagination. No European had seen the predecessor of the present queen; and the fairness of her complexion easily became the subject of rumour and phantasy.

That Mujaji II, who died in 1894, was fair cannot be disputed. Fairness is a feature of many Lovedu; it is a highly prized quality. There are tales among Europeans of the adventures of a Portuguese Don Juan in the bad old days; and undoubtedly, by Lovedu legend, a Portuguese trader visited the royal court. But if he had designs upon the queen, as

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is alleged, they were frustrated by the beer which was pressed upon him and rendered him powerless. We cannot attribute the sagacity of the queens, as did Rider Haggard, in his story of *She-who-must-be-obeyed*, to her pure Arabian ancestry. There may be Arab blood in her veins, as there probably is in the veins of all her people; certainly it was not by virtue of any foreign blood that 'She' ruled the tribe, and there is nothing that suggests that the Lovedu owe their organization of culture to an alien conqueror. They are among the politically weakly organized rather than highly centralized Bantu. Haggard's book, which appeared in 1886, correctly emphasizes the high status of women, the pride in female ancestry, the inaccessibility of the queen; and it is upon her immortality that the plot turns. There are also mysterious caves, but people never lived in them.

A more recent picture of the Rain-Queen, based upon local rumour, has been given by Dicke in his *The Bush Speaks* (1936). There she is represented as a crafty woman of mixed white extraction who came with her people from West Africa, and with diabolic cunning induced among her people the belief that she was endowed with the supernatural power that created the clouds so often resting upon her mountains. The rain-priestess soon acquired fame, which she used to found a great kingdom, without, however, relying upon force of arms. To account more adequately for her Machiavellian intrigues, he supposes that her female ancestors were white women, sold to the Arabs on the slave markets of West Africa, who enchanted their masters with their sexual attractions; hence the device of ruling her councillors by remaining unmarried; hence also the many girls, wives of the queen, whose duty was to captivate foreign chiefs, to spy, 'to induce their new masters to attend the festivities, dances, beer drinks, orgies, licentious debaucheries continuously held at the rain-priestess' capital'. Thus we get from Dicke's book a picture of intrigue and debauchery at the capital, supported by assassinations and poisonings, of a kingdom 'built up on immorality, deceit and crime, with no effective striking force to support it'. Her councillors preferred to be ruled by a woman, so that sons of the queen always died before reaching maturity.

There is much else that may be gleaned from local gossip. People are incredulous if one says that one has seen the queen. They remember how Mujaji II deceived Joubert, the Boer general, who, after subjugating the tribe in 1894, was shown, not the true Mujaji, but some one who impersonated her. Forgetting the signal service of the missionary, the Rev. F. Reuter, who intervened on her behalf, they attribute to the cunning of the queen her acquittal of complicity in the rebellion which brought Joubert upon the scene and which led to the defeat and wholesale deportation of several tribes in the lowveld. The diplomacy of the queen had overcome the white man. These are the beliefs that have contributed to the fame of the Lovedu. Whatever basis in reality there may be for them, there is one thing we must note. Mujaji lives no more than twenty-one miles from Duivelskloof. There are flourishing European farms, particularly all along the west and south of her country. Yet the Lovedu have maintained intact their culture and their institutions,

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643 even the royal constellation of institutions, curious and incongruous with modern conditions though they might be.

000 And it is to a brief history of the royal institutions, as providing the key to an understanding of the Lovedu, that we shall now proceed. But let us say this: truth is ever stranger than fiction, yet it is also more complex and elusive. The truth that obtains in a strange world, made up of beliefs and values very different from our own, is not easy to recapture; there is no basis, no framework, in our lives for it. We are continuously confounded by inconsistencies and paradoxes, try as we would to turn our conceptions and theories this way and that and even upside down to fit the facts into them. What we shall try to do is to give a visual representation of a few historical events, by way of a series of pageants passing in review. A complete account of the background of the past is far beyond our purpose. It will be sufficient to represent the spirit of these events, leaving for another occasion the question of how far they have a true basis in fact.

173 The pageants are not arranged into groups by the tribal historian, but we may present them as if they were colossal cycles, the cycle of the kings and the cycle of the queens. Each cycle opens in mystery, the mystery of an incestuous conception that, instead of corrupting the world, crowns the sinner; it is the ritual vindication of revolutionary change. In the first cycle, which starts just before 1600 and ends two centuries later, the change signalizes the birth of the tribe; then follow wanderings and the settlement of an infant community, which slowly develops to the splendid stature of manhood; and, finally, corruption and dissensions lead to a downfall. But in the midst of the ruins of the catastrophic civil war, which ends the first cycle, a new conception is born and we are at the beginning of the second cycle. The first cycle is handled with simple power; but no single doctrine in it runs its full course. Yet it cannot be mere coincidence that the mystery which marks the birth of the tribe should also be invoked to account for the momentous change from kings to queens.

The cycle of the queens has not yet been completed; it began about 1800 and rapidly ran to the height of its splendour; and its crisis, prematurely brought to a head, has also been indefinitely lengthened by the intervention of a new order of things, ushered in by the advent of the European. We cannot predict when the crisis will end or what the outcome of so prolonged a suspense will be, for the response to the challenge of this new order is now only taking shape and direction. But of this we can be certain, that in a world ordained by the white man there is less room for the vast sweep of the legendary mysteries. The tribal historian is unequal to the task of harmonizing the play of new, intractable forces with the theme of his exalted design.

The history of Lovedu kings and queens is not unlike the legends of the saints. The tribal historian is, of course, not troubled by a sacred theme, by the eternal struggle between Good and Evil; but he must justify historical events, he must bring them into relation with the grand purposes of the tribe. He never consciously tampers with essential facts; he uncritically accepts tradition that has been handed down to him.

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There is no direct falsification, but the way in which all distinctions of place and time are ignored leads to strange distortions. The tribal historian pictures man and events, not in the shape of their setting in the past, but in the colours of the values of the present. This involves inevitable selection and rearrangement. Again, legend without dramatic appeal is liable to be lost in oblivion; and so the historian, telling his story by the fireside, must be a dramatist. He groups his material, centres them upon important events and colours them to harmonize with the total picture of the society he has in mind. It is not always easy to reproduce either the whole picture or that touch here and those lines there, which give it its distinctive character and meaning. There are delineations of what in the society are regarded as we regard original sin, but they effect the salvation, not the damnation of man. A treacherous deed assumes the form of a glorious achievement. A usurper is turned into a hero. Royal incest, instead of threatening the security of the society, strengthens the divine right to rule. These are some of the critical moments in the history of Lovedu kings and queens that we wish to present by a series of pageants.

THE CYCLE OF THE KINGS

The First Pageant (*c.* 1500). The sons of Monomotapa, mighty monarch of the Vakaranga, quarrel and each sets himself up as an independent *mambo*, or chief, dividing Vukhalaga, the empire of their father, among themselves. One of these chiefs has his capital at the mountain of Maulwi, somewhere in Rhodesia. His people, prostrating themselves in his presence, call him *muloswi* or *murozwi*, but he has merely taken that name as a praise title to mark the link between him and the king of the Rozwi. Perhaps it is only a political link, not implying kinship of any kind. We do not know. Mambo rules his people, not by force, but through his supernatural prerogatives, for he is a sacred king. Tradition dictates that he should end his reign by ritual suicide. He is appointed, not in accordance with man-made rules, but by the spirit of his predecessor, who holds the door of the hut in which he died against all but the true heir; and it is only through that doorway that his successor can ascend the throne.

This *mambo* has a daughter, Dzugudini, and, though she is unmarried, she has an infant son, Makaphimo. Mambo wishes to punish the seducer of his daughter, but Dzugudini and her mother refuse to disclose the identity of the culprit, saying, 'The father of the child of a king's daughter is not to be known.' Mambo becomes more and more suspicious. Dzugudini's mother steals the rain charms and the sacred beads, and feverishly teaches her daughter their virtues and their use; and before Mambo can take action, Dzugudini and her infant son flee to the south.

After a long and eventful journey, the fugitives, accompanied by a handful of followers, arrive in Vulovedu, where they settle and found the tribe of the Lovedu. We do not know whether Mambo ever discovered who had seduced his daughter; but Lovedu tradition records that Makaphimo was the issue of the incestuous union of uterine brother

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and sister. The brother remains as *mambo*, successor to his father; the sister, Dzugudini, by virtue of her incest, justifies the creation of a new people.

The Second Pageant (*c.* 1650). Both Dzugudini and Makaphimo have died, the first in Nareni, the second at Khumeloni. One of the nobles, remaining on the highveld, is moving southwards from near Munnik, later to establish the chiefdom of Mamaoolo; two brothers of Makaphimo tarry on the way down the escarpment, and we see the one, Mahasha, sowing his seeds (*hu hasha*) to test the agricultural possibilities, the other, Mudiga, struggling to drive off the lions which surround (*hu diga*) his settlement. Muhale, son of Makaphimo, is ruling at Khumeloni. He is the acknowledged founder of the greatness of the Lovedu during the cycle. He successfully appeals to Mahasha and Mudiga to rejoin him; they give him their daughters as wives and he makes them his great headmen.

But Muhale's reign stands out boldly because of his subjugation of the Khoga, primitive denizens of the forest of Ḍaja. They have no fire, and live like wild animals, eating raw meat; their huts are badly constructed and dirty; they till the soil with sharpened sticks instead of hoes; and they have neither chief nor any visible form of government. The fair-skinned, cultured Lovedu set about educating these Calibans of savage humanity, teaching them the uses of fire. The Khoga find a new contentment in the sweetness of cooked food and in warming themselves by the hearth fires. Savage pupil and cultured tutor become close friends, so close that the savage unsuspectingly shows his benefactor the qualities of 'the place of the gods' (*vadimoni*) in the forest at Ḍaja. They envisage a brave new world, but they do not know that they are being deceived For in reality the Lovedu, coveting 'the place of the gods', are planning their destruction, They do not disclose the knowledge that fire can burn the veld; for they intend that 'their spears shall be fire'. And presently they set the grass alight and the fire scatters some Khoga, but burns most of them to death.

A moment later we see the Lovedu praying at the shrines at Ḍaja. When Muhale dies they bury him there; the Lovedu no longer fear the ancestral spirits of the Khoga. (For the fire, we may suppose, is here, as in the great transition ceremonies, a sacred rite. It effects the transition from danger to safety, from defilement to sanctity; the power for evil of foreign spirits it converts to a power for good in the service of the usurper; it cleanses the alien past and welds it firmly into the present.) As the pageant passes we see the ruins of another strange people, the Ḍgona. The Lovedu dread these ruins; they build far from them; avenging spirits, who have never been assimilated, contaminate the soil; the fire which purified and aggregated the sacred places of the Khoga was not used against them.

The Third Pageant (*c.* 1700). At Ḍaja, beside the grave of Muhale, we see another, that of Malaji. 'He who makes the country sleep', for that is what his name means, has left behind him peace and plenty. The

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little colony, sheltered in the fastnesses of its seclusion, is busy working 173
out its salvation. The Lovedu have ample living space, for the lowveld 643
is still almost devoid of inhabitants. Beyond it there are great nations, kept at a distance by geographical obstacles. The Lovedu are not only secure in their mountain fastnesses, but also protected by those far-off barriers—the massive mountains towering over the Olifants River in the south, stretching forth a gigantic limb to the north, and the deep, tsetse-fly infested Limpopo Valley circling the west as a moat defensive of their home.

Men are discussing to whom Malaji has entrusted the rain charms, to Pheduli, 'the Drainer of the Rivers,' or to his eldest son, Maḍaji, whose nickname, 'the Filler of the Rivers,' is much more auspicious. Maḍaji settles their doubts by driving off Pheduli and seizing the throne. But in the sequel we see drought and famine in Vuloyedu, while at Khivela, where Pheduli rules, copious rains bring plenteous crops. Year after year Maḍaji's magic sweeps up gales that scatter the clouds hanging over Ḍaja, whereas Pheduli constrains them to drop their gentle rain at Khivela.

The contrast is especially evident to the headmen living near Tzaneen. They secretly ally themselves with Pheduli; they spread rumours of a mighty army marching upon the capital. At length their strategy succeeds. Maḍaji flees to the forest, unsuspectingly entrusting his defence to the traitors; and when they report defeat and persuade him to rally his forces in the north, he is trapped into crossing the Maḍazwi River. It is a river which, even to-day, kings cross at the price of their crown; it drains the source of their power to rule. Maḍaji thus forfeits his right to the throne, and Pheduli, safely installed, becomes the mighty Transformer of the Clouds.

Faith in the sanctity of a system which may exclude the elder in favour of the younger son is restored; man-made rules, which usurp the function of the spirit presiding over the choice of a successor, are discredited. There is no room in this pageant (nor is there in tradition) for the defection, probably at this time, of a considerable section of the tribe, who later become the people of Mamaila.

The Fourth Pageant (*c.* 1750–1800). Pheduli's grave stands beside those of his forefathers. The scene discloses Khiali, the fair-faced king, reclining in a seat hewn out of the rock on the summit of a mountain amid immense walls of stone. In the spirit in which the scene is portrayed, with its mounds of masonry and its structures of stone, the impression conveyed is one of Zimbabwic splendour. (The ruins are still there, phallic stones projecting from rough stone walls some 8 ft. high, [172] and the sculptured seat is merely two rocks in their natural position. But it is with the spirit, not the reality of the scene that we are concerned.)

Khiali does not notice those faint figures of foreigners crowding into the background. They are the Sotho invaders of the lowveld, pressing over the mountains in the south, clambering down the escarpment in the west, and in far-off Phalaborwa settling in an unfavourable environment, whence some would soon leave to encroach upon Vuloyedu. On

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his magnificent material foundations Khiali is concerned to build a strong spiritual edifice. His predecessors were content to entrust the welfare of the divine prince, he who should ascend the throne, to the care of the gods. But he, Khiali, by strengthening the hands of the gods, would secure for ever the succession of the sacred heir.

As Khiali sits there, a youth, obviously concerned to avoid detection, appears in the shadows of an opening in the fence. He slinks away when he sees others beside Khiali in the courtyard. A moment later he reappears, only to be driven back by Khiali, showering curses upon his head. But later we see Khiali and the youth whispering together in the king's private hut; the king is secretly teaching him the use of the rain charms. The youth is Mugɔdɔ the Outcast, youngest son of Khiali His father stints him of everything, makes him dwell far from the capital, treats him like a thief, and refuses him entry into his village except when he comes alone and unobserved by a secret pathway through the undergrowth. These things he does to deceive the people and safeguard Mugɔdɔ's title to the throne. But they also develop a supersensitiveness in the Outcast.

Thwarted in his youth, Mugɔdɔ suffers irreparable damage to his self-respect; he is obsessed by suspicions; he imagines that every man's hand is against him. His councillors are adulterers and sorcerers, corrupting his wives, plotting to usurp his position. Scandal and dissension sap the strength of the kingdom. His elder brother, Khashani, rises against him; he is driven off, but the tribe splits into two; and more than a century later, in the second cycle, a descendant of Khashani challenges Mujaji with a foreign creed. Mugɔdɔ answers his detractors with wholesale executions, but he is concerned to vindicate himself rather than to regain order in the land. In a civil strife between two of his headmen, he makes no move until he feels himself insulted by 'the rusty arrows fit for the rubbish heap' that cause the blood of a kinsman to flow. The crowning catastrophe that embitters his soul is the conduct of his wayward sons. They enter the huts of his younger wives; they slaughter his cattle to gain popularity at their father's expense; they send him the dregs after draining the tributary beer.

And Mugɔdɔ's reign ends in chaos and confusion. Royal kinsmen massacre one another; internecine strife is followed by unparalleled famine; ravenous wild beasts terrorize the villages; Malegudu, one of Mugɔdɔ's sons, gains control for a time, but he has eventually to flee before Mujaji, his sister, and is assassinated in Vendaland; Khirbe, another son, seeks refuge in Thɔvɔbland, where he dies an unnatural death; Sephumulo, a powerful noble, unable to stomach subjection to Mujaji, who is gaining the ascendancy, severs his allegiance and establishes the twin tribes of Rakwadu and Sekhɔpɔ. And as these disasters befall the tribe, the first cycle completes its course.

THE CYCLE OF THE QUEENS

The Fifth Pageant (*c.* 1800). As the second cycle opens, the disasters which appear to be the Nemesis upon the vice of an uncertain succession

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(for it was Khiali's attempt to readjust the machinery of succession which maladjusted Mugɔdɔ for the task of a king) are reconstructed to form a chain of triumph for Mujaji. The most dramatic moments are not the disasters, but two interconnected events: Mugɔdɔ's prophecy and Mugɔdɔ's sin.

At the end of the civil strife, into which the insult of the rusty arrows goads Mugɔdɔ to throw his decisive weight, he orders the war horns to be sounded; and as he begins a solitary, spectacular dance (*hu pɛbɛla*), his people, prostrating themselves, solemnly intone his praises: 'Mugɔdɔ of the neck-with-great-folds-of-fat, wherein dó rest both goods and men, who hurls his challenge with the rain-horn; Mugɔdɔ of Pheduli, Transformer of the Clouds, he kills as he lists and spares whom he likes.' Pointing in the four directions, he raises his voice in prophecy: 'I am going away to creep into the horn of a cow (i.e. to die). I do not like to sleep in the open, vainly counting the stars. I go to unloose the black ants in the east. They will bite you and kill you, but in the end you will overcome them. Thereafter I shall unleash the red ants in the west; you will fight them, but you will fight them in vain. Further, I say this country will be ruled by a frontal skirt.'

It is Mugɔdɔ's farewell message just before he dies. But the prophecy epitomizes the three great moments in the cycle of queens: the accession of a woman, the raids of Ɖguni hordes (black ants), and the conquest by the European (red ants).

The Sixth Pageant (*c.* 1800). Mugɔdɔ is the instrument of an inexorable fate. His faith in his fellow men, in his councillors, even in his sons, has been shattered. He muses that women also are faithless. But their faith, however unfaithful, keeps them falsely true; they intrigue against him as their husband, but they are loyal to him as their king. Above all, their mystery is allied to a power, not to blast the tribe to fragments, but to subdue men and turn their passions to the service of the state. That is the vision given to Mugɔdɔ, and the guarantee of its divine origin is the far-off past in which Dzugudini originated the tribe. That past also suggests how the vision can be realized. And in the scene before us these mighty issues are handled with a simplicity and a directness which it is impossible to reproduce.

Mugɔdɔ betakes himself to his favourite daughter at Maulwi, sacred reminder of the mountain in Rhodesia. Simply he tells her of his purpose, but she doubts its divine source: 'It cannot be, my father,' she says; 'these things are too difficult.' Mugɔdɔ goes again to her, but she remains mystified that a sin that defiles can be a rite that sanctifies.

Then Mugɔdɔ goes to Lekhwareni, the despised place of stones and of slothful people (for, according to their praise song, they burn their nails roasting the maize that they should have stamped). There lives Mujaji, daughter of his wife, Mamujaji. To her also he confides his vision; he tells her she will be queen if, though celibate, she will bear the heir to the throne. He is not speaking of a virgin birth, for she understands that he, her father, will be the father of her issue. 'You are allwise, O father,' she replies. 'I am the servant of your will.' A secret hut

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is built; an inquisitive intruder, the favourite wife of Mugɔdɔ, suffers the extreme penalty; and in due course a son, not a daughter, is born.

But Fate tricks Mugɔdɔ in vain. The son is strangled and a little later there is a daughter. She is to become Mujaji II.

The Seventh Pageant (*c.* 1850). Mujaji I has already been on her resplendent throne for half a century; she has turned the chaos of her predecessor's reign to peace and prosperity; and, surrounded by restrictions which forced her into seclusion and fostered the idea of her sagacity and immortality, she has won the fame and attraction which drew so many foreigners to her capital. She is 'the white-faced Mankhadeni, radiant as the setting sun'. 'Huckster in her hut', perched like an eagle's eyrie on the fringe of a forest, she dispenses as she wishes the life-giving rain. 'She casts away some; others she shares with the vultures.'

Hosts of foreign ambassadors and potentates gather at her court. Some bring cattle, others their daughters or sisters; these are the gifts with which they show their homage or supplicate for rain. In the company we see messengers from Manukuza, dread monarch of Gasaland, supplicating with mighty gifts from their master; ambassadors of Zwide, challenger of Chaka himself, seeking to ward off the chastisement of locusts and drought, but smitten to death for his presumption in coming so near Ʋulovedu; and also an envoy from Moshesh in far-off Basutoland. Less pretentious are the men from Malevɔxɔ, whose Lovedu wife had taught him the elements of the magic of rain-making; from Vendaland, where they call Mujaji 'the wife who brings them water to wash their face'; from Phalaʋorwa, upon whose internal struggles Mujaji arbitrates. From Chopiland and Ʋunyai, from the Ʋirwa and Tswana, from the very ends of the world, there are suppliants. Sekwati, the great Pedi king, is seeking a matrimonial alliance, hence that herd of cattle in the courtyard; Mali of the Khaha and Magaepia of the Letswalo, queens crowned in their own countries in imitation of the immortal Mujaji, come to be strengthened and fitted for their task. But the mightiest tribute of all is the gift from the Zulu king, who, disappointed by the failure of his mission to the great Swazi rain-maker, supplicates the rain-maker of rain-makers.[1]

The pageant is incomplete without its background, the armed hordes of Chaka and Moselekatse, of Soshangane and Mantatisi, of Thulare and Mafefe, laying waste and massacring, and in the wake of the trail of desolation, the smaller tribes and those miserable remnants, the guerrilla bands of cannibals, completing the destruction. They all are mightier than Mujaji, who is unarmed yet invincible. And, as the pageant passes by, we see innumerable refugees flocking from all points of the compass to seek sanctuary in the inviolable land.

The Eighth Pageant (1894). The sceptre, secretly entrusted to Mujaji II on her accession forty years and more before this pageant passes, is

[1] A Zulu author, M. J. Mpanza, in his *UGuqabadele* (1930), p. 53, confirms this. He says that if there was excessive drought, the Zulu king would send black cattle to the Swazi king with a request for rain; and, if there was still no rain, he would send to Mujaji.

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the symbol of forces that swayed a bygone world. People are uncertain of their bearings in the new world, their sense of security has been shaken. The black ants from Swaziland have left a scar, though they were chastened when the legions of Ludongo were defeated. Now the red ants are brought upon the scene as the aftermath of the exploits of Albasini, self-appointed chief of the Magwamba (Shangana-Tonga) and Native Commissioner of the Boer Republic. The sceptre only weakly shows the force of spiritual power. The tribute Mujaji sends to Albasini, it is true, smites him with drought; upon General Joubert, curious to behold the royal majesty, a far-off sister of the queen, who was also her 'wife', is palmed off as the mysterious 'She-who-must-be-obeyed'; the Transformer of the Clouds still is the 'huckster in her hut'.

But to the workers and warriors of the 'red ants', the sceptre is like a broken reed rather than a magic wand. Some of them with impunity appropriate the country, enlisting in their service the denizens of the soil; others are collecting taxes, exacting tribute and redrawing age-old boundary lines; still others invade the sacred places, even desecrating the drums at Maulwi. The princes still come, but they supplicate surreptitiously.

The temporary triumphs cannot offset the disastrous defeats, and Mujaji, bewildered by the turn of events, does not know how to adjust her weapons and her diplomacy to the needs of the new situation. She circumvents the curiosity of Joubert, but she fails to save her subjects from serfdom. When the grave of Khashani, the Christian kinsman whom she martyred, becomes the rallying point of a disloyal creed, when the conspiracy to expel the European intruder ends in the disaster of the deportation of her neighbours, she loses her faith in the gods of her ancestors and adjures her followers to trust the apostle of a creed that was uprooting these gods. Pathetically she presses the poison cup to her lips, conforming to the letter, not to the spirit, of the ritual end ordained by her ancestors. In a world indifferent to the eternal verities, that cup is like an empty sham and that end like a vain sacrifice.

The pageant passes on. A cheerless panorama unfolds before us as Mujaji III ascends the throne. To submission is added humiliation. When the white man, coming to arrange for the recognition of the new queen, sees old Mathogani, who had impersonated Mujaji II, the proceedings are stopped. The Lovedu are made to pay for their presumption by being denied a ruler until the old woman dies. They retaliate by dubbing her the 'Chief of the white men' and by accelerating her end.

But it is a fruitless revenge. They are faced with the problem of reconciling the claims of two incongruous worlds: is the authority of the queen to be derived from the alien conqueror and his ceremonies or from the spirit of the deceased and the rite of the door? The reality of the old rite is the sham of the new order; it is a mere coincidence upon which no title can be based. But also in all spheres of culture and of life these dualistic forces clash with one another; they are in a death grapple which lasts throughout the reign of Mujaji III.

The conflict is epitomized in the conflict between Shalala and the royal house. The commoner, using the weapons of the European lawyer,

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173 ranges himself against royalty, who invoke the powers of their ancestors
613 When Magoma, daughter of the queen, illicitly allies herself to the commoner and anarchy threatens disruption of the tribe, the royal house reluctantly invites intervention of the white man, submitting, however, only the superficial issues. Ostensibly Shalala suffers defeat, but in reality the struggle continues; and in this conflict, as in the wider conflict of the warring worlds, we are left in doubt where the victory lies.

FROM THE PAGEANTS TO THE PEOPLE

173 Only a few of the great figures of the royal family paraded before us in these pageants. We must regard them as expressions of some of the themes which the outlook of the society has emphasized. The twice-invoked incest theme is brought into relation with revolutionary national changes, like a transition rite in the life of an individual. Incest precedes and validates first the birth of the tribe, then the accession of a woman and her elevation to a mystical pedestal. Is it a case of the greater the sin the greater the saint, of the polluted and the sacred converging at infinity? We cannot say for certain. We saw the Lovedu pictured as a Prospero teaching the Calibans of Khioga. But primitive and unorganized though these Khioga were, they undoubtedly knew fire, and the use of fire against a fireless foe who has become a friend is unnecessarily treacherous, though it is, for the end in view, dramatically and, we may suppose, ritually effective. When internal dissension arises, the conflict is posed as one between the chief son and the 'chosen' son. The victory of the 'chosen' son vindicates the divine right of the rain-priest against mere legal precedence. This theme is once more dramatically thrown into relief by the device of naming the chief son 'the Filler' and the 'chosen' son 'the Drainer of the Rivers'. The contrasts are handled with consummate skill. Notice also the psychological insight that marks the manner in which we are led up to the climax of the change from kings to queens. The Outcast thwarted in his youth is over-sensitive and suspicious; he seeks compensation in revenge; and he is the paranoic who utters the fatal prophecy. The prophecy is not merely a vain delusion; it has a purpose and was put into the mouth of the Outcast after the event; and as such it is a magnificent piece of stagecraft. Yet it is not considered to be equal to the task of sufficiently magnifying the mysticism of Mujaji I; that task is finally achieved by a repetition of the incest theme. Those were dangerous times; drastic handling of their dramatic moments was called for. The culminating point of Mujaji's power stands out prominently amid the surrounding turmoil. It also challenges it. The drama suddenly ends; it has run its course. In the sequel, the problem of the death-grapple of dualistic worlds has developed too suddenly, too disturbingly, for the powers of the tribal historian.

These are some of the conceptions handled in the pageants. They reflect ultimate values, the philosophy of the society. They are on a different plane from the ordinary lives and interests of the people. To re-orientate ourselves, we must bear in mind three things: firstly, the royal pageants are but one of a large series, for besides the nuclear ruling

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736 and the universal approval of these efforts, to be kind to orphans. The chief trouble, it would appear, comes from the other children, who tend to lay the blame for all their wrongdoings on the orphan, who has no mother to champion him; they will quarrel with and tease him, goading him into fighting till even a well-disposed mother finds him a source of trouble in her home. It is significant that in a story much liked by children it is an orphan boy who succeeds in making rain when the rest of the country has dried up, and who receives many hundreds of cattle as a reward.

The concepts associated with orphans, the sad intonation that creeps into the very pronunciation of the word *tsiwana*, indicate that, though there may be little basis in fact for the ill-treatment associated with them, just as in our own society few stepmothers really ill-treat their step-children, on the whole the Lovedu feel as we do that not even the best treatment at the hands of relatives can make up for the loss of father or mother. We well remember how, one day at a strange village, a small boy burst into tears because we asked him which of the men of the village was his father. He was an orphan.

736 That on the whole it is only the closest relatives who are willing to ● 643 undertake kinship obligations which offer no reciprocal advantages is shown by the fact that it is looked upon as the duty of the queen to look after orphans who have no near relations. They are brought to the royal village (as they were to a far greater extent in the last reign), where they are looked after and, in the case of boys, given cattle to obtain a bride. Similarly, when an old man or woman without near kin dies it is the queen who undertakes the responsibility and defilement of burial.

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CHAPTER X

COGS IN THE POLITICAL MACHINERY

Ritual suicide, divine selection, the fire rite, and celibacy as aspects of the royal complex of institutions—links in the political system forged by the wives of the queen—the part women play in politics—structure and individuality of the districts.

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THE political system is not a thing apart, standing aloof from marriage and social structure. These and other institutions are closely interwoven. The political scheme is effective largely because it is patterned upon the arrangements and relies upon the genius of the social system. Its most emphasized aspects are the elaboration of institutions which centre in the queen and the highly developed local administration in the hands of the district heads. The districts form a federation rather than a union, but their autonomy is counterbalanced by subtle devices holding them closely together in the meshes of a web radiating from the capital. The district and the tribe itself may, from certain points of view, be regarded as the village writ large, but the village is not a political unit, and the approach from its organization is not comprehensive enough for fruitful examination.

The district, with its distinctive community life, is linked to the capital upon the pattern of reciprocities created by marriage and *munywalo*,[1] the system thus harmonizing with the most powerfully supported institutions. The reliance upon the queen as a rain-making divinity further stimulates the growth of a common tribal consciousness. Elsewhere chiefs are also rain magicians, but failure to produce rain is not a fatal defect. The Lovedu queen, however, suffers deposition if she fails, and it is upon her rain-making divinity that are based the structure of the royal institutions and much of the political system. And the two systems, centring apparently poles apart, the one in marriage and *munywalo*,[1] and the other in rain-making, have been interlocked as skilfully as the most intricate piece of machinery.

The complexity of the tribe as regards constituent groups, and the submergence of the royal group amid the other groups create a problem which, from the point of view of tribal solidarity, could conceivably be solved in many ways. The Lovedu solution stresses local autonomy side by side with social links. Many functions elsewhere reserved to chiefs are exercised by district heads, and the theoretical authority of the queen is seldom interposed in practice. Yet they are powers of persuasion, not of coercion. Her authority is congruent with the main emphases of the society: the reliance on compromise, the aversion from military institutions, and the subtlety of feminine persuasion. These characteristics promoted the willing allegiance of the many foreigners drawn to the sanctuary of Vuloyedu, where they were safeguarded, not only against their foes, but also against the uncertainties of nature. In return for protection and security, they sent their daughters and sisters to be the wives of the

[1] [See categories 582 and 583 164 Analyst]

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queen. And in the system these wives, after a period of training at the royal court, were re-allocated to district heads and royal relatives.

The system is not unknown elsewhere. Among the Shona, so we are told by Bullock, when one tribe conquered another, the survivors were incorporated by being given wives; in time of famine, tribes sometimes exchanged their daughters for food; and some of the Mambo handed their wives to their bodyguard, who gave in return, not bride-price, but faithful service. The Rozwi appear to have maintained their dominance over subjected chiefs, not by deposing them, but by assisting in their ceremonial appointment and the superimposition of the cult of Mwari, the high god, which had its priesthood and could withhold rain. This cluster of institutions is interesting to us because the Lovedu came from those parts and have retained some of their features. Lovedu district heads give 'tributary' wives to the queen in exchange for rain and these wives are re-allocated to important men. But the form and setting of the institution has changed; the circulation of wives, drawn into the network of the political and social scheme, subserves the purposes of the Lovedu cultural configuration.

By singling out for brief consideration the complex of royal institutions and of districts, we are giving prominence to certain aspects of the political structure. That is unavoidable in a generalized account, which must largely ignore the variations among the 140 districts (of which fifty are on European-owned land). We have often referred to cultural divergences and the tolerance towards them. In the autonomous districts they are very much in evidence. You may be told over and over again there is no such thing as ancestors represented by snakes, except among the possessed and in their cult; and the conception seems alien to a religion in which ancestors are not reincarnated in an animal, but animals may be dedicated to ancestors. Yet suddenly one day you may find that the sacred object (*thugula*) of a head of a district, such as Relela, is a snake. The lack of uniformity and the tolerance of almost contradictory customs may give the impression of ineffective political institutions. Conformity there must be in the interests of economy and solidarity, but the conformity need not be that of a regimented society such as ours. As to the royal cluster of institutions, we shall consider those maintaining the confidence of the people in the powers of the queen, and those converting tribute of wives into the visible links of the social organization. The elaboration of the royal institutions must not, however, obscure the essential humanity of the queen; we do not deal with the latter, but we must remember that it is a factor of great importance in the dynamics of these institutions.

In 140 years there have been only three queens, and Mujaji III, after having already ruled for over forty-three years, is still physically strong and is said never to have had a day's illness. The Lovedu attach little importance to the longevity of their queens, who in other tribes have been immortalized. In the north, whence the Lovedu came, kings ruled only for brief periods; they were not allowed to become old or decrepit, lest the kingdom suffer; and either they committed suicide or they were killed. Don Santos, writing in 1607, records that the kings of

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643 171 Sofala had formerly to take poison when disaster or a natural defect fell upon them. Among the Lovedu, tradition decrees that the queen shall have no physical defect and must poison herself, not when she is old, but at the end of the fourth initiation (*vudiga*) of her reign. The emergence of physical imperfections and the holding of the fourth *vudiga* cannot both determine the date of suicide. In fact, no reign has been cut short because of bodily defects, though the conception of the relation survives. The queen is believed to be immune from disease and it is thought that her first will be her last illness; it is even said that Mujaji III's elder uterine brother was excluded from the throne because of his weak ankles. At the same time, not kings, but queens are wanted, there are no tests of physical fitness as are recorded for tribes in the north, and in the legends [173] of the Lovedu and of tribes which, following the Lovedu, have ritual suicide, physical defects do not figure as a theme. In this complex, heirs to the throne have been disqualified or chiefs have been deposed because of inability to make rain, disobedience to their sovereign, or adultery with his wives. Among the Mamaila, a branch of the Lovedu, one chief is said to have become a cripple because he forced open the door which magically yields to the touch of the true heir, and the Nemesis that overtook him is attributed to his sin, not to his defect. Impotence disqualifies in the north, but Mujaji II was barren and, in the pattern as adopted in some tribes, such as the Khaha of Maake, barrenness of the queen is expected; for, as the queen may have no official husband, it is a virtue to have no children. That conception is not accepted by the Lovedu, for Mujaji II's barrenness was a source of sadness and strife and every effort was made to cure her. Physical fitness is an aspect of the perfection and divinity of the queen, but it has no practical relation to the right of succession.

643 778 171 177 The relation between the length of a reign and the initiations is far more obscure. In many tribes where ritual suicide is enjoined (Thavina, Khaha, Dirwa), the number of 'schools' is said to be seven. The 'schools' are there held more frequently, and possibly there is some connexion with the number of sacred drums (*digɔma*), for the Khaha have seven and the Lovedu four. The chief's life, as we have seen, is intimately bound up with the drums; both drums and 'schools' are great *dogɔma*, objects or activities in which power is concentrated. Power is also concentrated in *dithugula*, a category of objects chiefly associated with the gods. The distinction is not that between magic and religion; the *digɔma* and *dithugula* appear to belong to different cultural complexes. The one was characterized, we may suppose, by 'schools', drums, and cults linked up with national calendric observances, dramatization of the crises in life, and the sanctity and power of the chief; the other, by sacred beads, shrines, reincarnation of ancestors in dedicated animals, and ritual suicide of the chief. In the process of merging, the great *digɔma* were, we suggest, grafted on to the royal institutions and brought into relation with the life as well as the death of the chief. This is little more than speculation, for it is difficult to isolate the oldest cultural substrata and their distinctive patterns.

The rule about physical fitness is now merely an ideal and, similarly,

The rule about physical fitness is now merely an ideal and, similarly, ritual suicide is not conceived to have any relation to the welfare of the country. People do not say that the country will suffer if the physical powers of the queen fail. But ritual suicide does elevate the queen to a divinity; only by her act, not because of susceptibility to the weaknesses of man, can she die. Age neither increases nor decreases her powers. She is the 'soil'; her death 'heals' or 'dries up' the soil in the double sense of defiling it (as twins do) and scorching it (as the sun does); and as they phrase it, the 'country dies with its owner'. Consequently, after the queen's death, famines come, cattle and people succumb, and many flee the country. When Mujaji II committed suicide in 1894, there followed the *matshɔna*, the three years of unprecedented drought and pests, during which, according to contemporary European observers, practically all the cattle and a third of the population died. After the death of Mugɔdɔ, likewise, there was a great famine. The only other famine vividly recorded by tradition was during the reign of a chief who, being a usurper, was unable to make rain. Though the death of a chief presages death of the country, there is no great hurry to appoint a new queen. To the unfolding of a plan that guarantees abundance, immediate needs, even the need for the life-giving rain, must be subordinated.

For an account of succession to the throne we have to rely upon the memories of men who were adults forty-five years ago. The practical and the ideal are confused in their minds. The generalized account we give is thus not specifically related to the death of Mujaji II unless otherwise indicated. Shortly before her death, the queen calls together her great men, sits silently looking at them for a while, and then retires to her hut. She will not see again the young boys who have gone to the *vudiga*. Long before this, Mujaji II and her inner 'council' had named the daughter of Leakhali, who was her 'sister' and great wife, as successor; she had driven both mother and daughter with their brothers from the country, but was secretly receiving and instructing the daughter. None but a small circle of close relatives knew of these arrangements; and a little later she took poison (*khitaba*) in which the fatal ingredients are said to be the brain and spinal cord of the crocodile. There is a rule that the killer of a crocodile is for ever debarred from entering the capital, a prohibition patterned upon the taboos against bringing into a village the wood of trees with which shrines and protective charms (*dithugula*) are made, for these trees 'reveal', and so render useless, what they create. The poison is not conceived to kill instantaneously; the queen dies in the presence of those who know the secrets, but the death is not made public. Those who pass the royal hut still greet her; even cases are still submitted as if for her final decision. Deception of the people is the aim emphasized in descriptions and in phraseology. In the old days many cattle were killed 'to deceive the people', but neither this killing, which provided at least for the funeral feast and the skin for the dead body, nor the other arrangements, had this function only. The spirit of the deceased continues, as it were, to preside over the country and no one could take over the reins of government.

The body decomposes, it is ritually rubbed (*hu fɔrɔla*) to remove skin

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and dirt for the vital ingredient of the rain medicine, and after a while close relatives secretly dig a grave at Maulwi, the place where to-day the sacred drums are also kept. The grave is deep, for the queen must stand upright, 'taking care' of her country, and facing to the north, whence her ancestors came. The body is wrapped in a greenish-black cloth, a portion still of what was brought from the north, and over it is wound the skin of an ox. The hearse proceeds from the village secretly at night, and, as the great must rest, the bearers stop every few yards. Sacred beads, a calabash of water, a firebrand, the grains upon which people live and (in the old days) the body of a man, the 'mat' of the chief, are interred with the queen. The calabash and firebrand, used also to expel a usurper, provide the essentials for the 'journey' to be undertaken. A slab of stone covers the mouth of the grave and facilitates the re-opening whenever rain medicine (*mufugo*) is to be poured into it. The grave is not all at once filled up with soil; it is guarded against enemies, who might destroy the country with the medicine the body provides; and it is said that a wooden structure, on which the watchers sleep, is built over the grave. The soil at last reaches the neck, but the head must be left uncovered for perhaps six months, until it has completely decomposed.

A year later the district heads are assembled at the capital, the death is announced and the drum beaten, and people shave their heads. It is said that foreigners entered the country at the peril of life and belongings. When the hair has grown and the mourning period ends, all fires in the country are put out. This same fire-rite figures, as far as a district is concerned, at the installation of its head, and as far as the whole country is concerned, when all-pervasive impediments to rain are removed. It essentially consists—we have described it briefly in Chapter XV—of putting out fires with medicine (*mufugo*) by boys who receive the medicine at the capital, and of a chain of payments, by the women to the married men for the firebrand obtained from the *khɔrɔ* to re-light their fires, by the men to the boys for their services in the rite, and by the boys to the official keeper of the *mufugo* at the capital. Two distinctive patterns are explicit in this rite: fire in its aspect of a valuable commodity and as almost the prerogative of the chief, to whom his subjects must pay a royal 'fire tax'; and fire in its aspect of giving out deleterious 'heat', which must be counteracted by 'cooling' with *mufugo* (*hu fuga*, to blow upon by a cool breeze, to sprinkle with 'cooling' medicine).

Fire also belongs to a third pattern which links it up with crises or great changes, ritualizes its value, and uses it to extinguish an evil or to purify a state of defilement. In their present cultural connotation among the Lovedu, these three patterns are implicit in the nature of fire, but they do not always merge in ritual situations, and, as far as the evidence of the cultures of the Northern Transvaal go, they belong to different cultural configurations. This evidence seems to indicate that the 'royal tax', through which authority is asserted and acknowledged, came from the Karanga, that the association with purification and 'transitions' was borrowed from the old Sotho, and that the conception of 'heat' as the antithesis of health of body and well-being of the country, was contributed by a wider and less easily determinable culture substratum. The

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significance of the fire rite at the accession of a queen can be understood only in the context of the three patterns as they have been integrated into Lovedu culture and become merged in the rite.

Firstly, fire figures in the borrowed 'transition' rites, but not in the girls' puberty rite (*khɔba*). Midway in the sacred fire of the boys' circumcision (*vudiga*) is its central shrine at the place where the chief initiate (*washe*) sits. In the sanctum of the Bird of the *vyali* there is an undying fire. The end of these 'schools' is spoken of as 'a burning down' (*hu swa*): the fire destroys all the distinctive things of the 'school', the lodge, the tables, the tiniest bits of grass that fell from the dancing performers, and, as the lodge burns, the initiates, turning their backs upon it, may not look round and are irrevocably severed from their past. Again, when 'the country is not right' and has to be re-established or purified of its pollution with 'cooling' medicine (*mufugo*), a transition is implied, for it is said, 'The fires are put out to usher in a new year'. The same conception reappears when *mufugo* is used before the accession of a new queen.

Secondly, the firebrand, as the symbol of authority, figures in the warrant (*khiso*, i.e. firebrand) given by the queen which authorizes district heads to hold 'schools'. This warrant of authority is most strikingly evident in the firebrand and calabash handed to a disaffected noble or would-be usurper as an intimation that he is expelled from the country. It has merged with the *mufugo* rite enacted to render the earth receptive to the power of rain magic or to herald the accession of a queen; and here it takes the form of a 'royal tax' vicariously exacted through the women, their husbands, the boys sprinkling the medicine, and the keeper of the *mufugo* at the capital.

Thirdly, 'beating out' of fires with 'cooling' medicine belongs to a complex of rites for counteracting the harmful effects of 'heat', a conception explained in Chapter XII. 'Heat' not only arises from the contamination of death, but is the concomitant of disease, weakens the charms (*dithugula*), impedes rain, and defiles the earth. In all these cases it is combated with 'cooling' medicine, as we describe elsewhere. In addition, the *gɔma* drums are prevented from losing their concentrated power by the 'cool' river stones in them, witches are thwarted by protective charms (*diphaba*) in which the products of the sea are the most powerful elements, and the 'heat' of the ancestors' anger is 'cooled' with *mufugo*. The death of a queen 'dries up' or 'heats' the whole country, which has to be cooled as a preparation for the new ruler.

Thus in the fire rite at a queen's accession, the culture is handling complicated and all-important conceptions. The pervasive evil corrupting the country must be neutralized; the relationship of ruler and ruled, superior and inferior, must be visibly reasserted; and there must be enacted a momentous new start marking the inception of a new destiny and preparing the universe for the reception of the next rain-maker. The fire rite on this occasion symbolizes a mighty purification and 'transition', epitomizes the allegiance of subjects and the authority of the queen, and inaugurates a cosmic order in which the magic of a new rain-maker may be auspiciously manifested. That, in the Lovedu cultural context, is the meaning of the fire rite.

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643 578 After the fire rite there follows the rite of opening the door, which will determine the identity of the heir. No one knows for certain who will succeed. Some nobles, availing themselves of the interregnum, mobilize their supporters, and all come fully armed, for there is sure to be some display of hostility. Even in 1896, at the accession of Mujaji III, a son of a wife of Mujaji II and great councillor marched upon the capital supported by the Mahasha, but there was no strife, as Mujaji III's followers were prepared. The rival claimants, in the presence of the [342] assembled people, go one by one to the hut in which the queen died and which (like one of the queen's huts even to-day) has two doors. They approach the door one by one, address the spirit of the deceased, saying who they are, and lightly touch the door. It is arranged that the most ambitious claimants go first, and those who are indifferent as regards their prospects last, the true heir to whom the door will open taking his place between them.

The spirit of the deceased, by opening the door, chooses the successor. The new queen, taking the axe, spear, and shield of her royal predecessors, escapes by the other door. She may have to flee, if the party of a rival is too strong, but in time she will be formally presented by a great councillor to the people. There is doubt as to the fate of the person who held the door from within: some say he must die, others that he is given a wife and sent out of the country. There is much uncertainty and secrecy about what happened in 1896; it is even doubted whether the door was opened. The reason lay in the fear of European intervention, for just previously the Boer General had been deceived and the lowveld tribes conquered, as described in Chapter I. Cowed by disaster, the Lovedu wisely decided to emphasize, not their own ritual, but the formal confirmation of the accession by the European.

643 578 173 The opening of the door, as known among neighbouring tribes, serves chiefly to resolve conflicts between rivals to the throne. It sometimes co-exists with institutional predetermination of the heir—for instance, where he must be the chief son of a wife married with special ceremonies and with cattle contributed by the whole tribe, the issue of a house in which the tribesmen all have a stake. In such circumstances conflicts arise, and European authority throws its weight on the side of 'constitutional arrangements' rather than 'coincidence'. In some tribes the opening of the door serves to strengthen the claim of the institutional heir; that is the case where there is no great massing of institutions behind the chief heir and conflicts are liable to break out if there are several claimants of standing. Among the Lovedu, succession was quite uncertain, the personal choice of the chief, not primogeniture, being stressed. The great son seldom succeeded, it is said, because the second child was favoured; and that is one explanation of the origin of the Mamaila, Sekhɔpɔ, and Rakhwadu tribes, for the great son was driven out of the country. In traditional history the 'Filler of the Rivers', who was chief son and seized the throne, had to make way for the 'Drainer of the Rivers', who proved to be the choice of his father and to whom the rain secrets had been imparted. Khashani, the great son, was expelled by Mugɔdɔ, his younger brother (we do not know whether he was the second son), of whom it is

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said that his father treated him as an outcast in order to deceive the people. Khashani was, however, given ritual precedence and in this as well as in the fact that it was the line of Malegugu, great son of Mugɔdɔ, which provided the 'husbands' of the last two queens, we may see perhaps an attempt to compensate the great son and retain his allegiance. The pattern of antagonism to the true heir continued to be followed by the queens. Mugɔdɔ was outcast from the capital, Mujaji I was born in despised Lekhwareni, and Mujaji II and III were expelled from the country.

The choice of the heir among the kings is represented as exercised by them personally; he who must raise the heir to the queens is chosen by an inner, secret 'council' of relatives. We cannot describe its membership by saying that one is a sister, the other a brother, and so on; each is related to the chief in a dozen ways and their pre-eminence in the royal 'councils' derives from complicated inter-relationships, prestige, sagacity, and loyalty as well as institutionalized arrangements.

The accession of queens has raised new problems of succession. The heir apparent is theoretically prohibited from having children before she ascends, and, when she ascends, her powers of bearing children may be exhausted. This is a simple statement of a much more complicated situation, but suffice it to add that, ideally, should the queen or, if she is barren, her wife who is chosen to bear the heir, have male issue, the child has either to be killed or to be excluded by a mechanism with strong social or ritual sanctions—namely, the opening of the door. Mujaji I's son was killed, so it is said; but the uterine brother of Mujaji III was allowed to live and become a great councillor. Another problem is the exclusion from power of the 'husband' of the queen. Queens may not marry, but the physiological father of their children may be a councillor, as he was in the reign of Mujaji III, and it is essential that he should be a close relative. To support such arrangements in a patrilineal society is one of the functions of the 'opening of the door'. It also confirms choices made by the inner 'council', visibly and publicly demonstrates the will of the ancestors, enforces loyalty to all relatives of the royal house any one of whom may become chief, and unmistakably points out to whose hands the rain secrets have been entrusted.

The quarrels and conflicts leading to the flight of the heir are much stressed in tradition; they are nothing if not realistic, and one is often in doubt whether they are genuine or merely staged conflicts. Leakhali and her brother, together with Leakhali's daughter, Mujaji III, were genuinely expelled. Leakhali had her own village and her own wives and was proud and independent; she and her brother objected to the influence of a doctor who had come to cure Mujaji II of her barrenness, but stayed to be her lover. After a public insult to this doctor in the presence of the queen at a beer-party at Leakhali's village, the queen sent her wife the calabash and firebrand. Leakhali and her brother fled, and in exile Mujaji III was taught by her mother's brother, thus fulfilling, it is said, the law that the heir must be taught by her maternal uncle. The situation appears to be re-enacted to-day, with this difference, that it is the queen's own daughter who, after her lover's quarrel with a great councillor, fled

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643 578 687 644 to join him in exile. The conflict was so serious that the tribe seethed with disaffection, though the queen seemed to be torn between love for her daughter and disapproval of the whole episode. The present conflict is in many respects typical. There is, as there used to be in the past, strife between the old councillors, who lose their power when the old queen dies, and the new councillors, who side with the new queen. The latter gradually supplant the former, but regard with fear the day when the friends of the heir in turn will oust them. This struggle is very real, and seems to reflect a more fundamental conflict; for the exalted purpose of the royal institutions exacts an unnatural sacrifice by the queen in order to make way for the heir she naturally loves.

643 644 The whole royal complex is perfectly logical once it is granted that there must be queens, that succession is uncertain, and that ritual suicide is the guarantee of the chief's divinity. In a society in which the 'sister' (*khadi*) is priestess, her great religious role, still seen to-day among neighbouring tribes where chiefs are males, falls to the queen among the Lovedu. The ideal, imperfectly actualized since queens replaced kings, still persists that the *khadi* of the chief should have power and be given a large district to rule. In theory the brother of the chief is the great councillor, general, and judge. But in practice the complications set up by having queens throws these arrangements out of gear. True to pattern, the greatest district head is to-day a woman, who is a 'sister' to the queen and, though a 'sister' threefold (through mother, legal father, and paternal uncle), she is not the uterine or ritual 'sister'. At present the relatives through the queen's mother, not through Mujaji II her legal father, are important councillors, but it is not unlikely that in the next reign the great councillors will be the present heir's relatives through her legal father, the queen, who is also her physiological mother.

642 643 644 Owing to the inapplicability of the term 'council' to Lovedu arrangements, we need say only a few words on this subject. There is no need of a visible organization to support Lovedu court life, which is ceremonious, but not politically oriented. Power and authority derive from the queen's divine appointment, her exclusive secret of rain-making, and her strategic position in the social web. She is neither a military nor a political leader; she does not even have a priesthood organization to assist her in her function as high-priest. There are confidential advisers, but they neither constitute the more or less definite secret council (*sephiri*) of some neighbouring tribes nor necessarily function as political councillors; on the contrary the former, having assisted in the accession of the queen; are in institutional conflict with the latter, who later gain political control. The councillors represent the assertion of power by the rising generation of men in the sphere of law and politics as against women and the older generation in ritual, religion, and the social system. They are part mainly of the court (*khɔrɔ*) and the tribal gathering (*khivijɔ*), two indeterminate bodies.

644 643 634 Confidential advisers are mainly important district heads; councillors are always residents in the capital. Both are relatives, but, in the case of the confidants, not necessarily close relatives of the queen. In the inner royal circle, the closest kin are necessarily those reckoned through the

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queen's mother—that is, either the queen's predecessor on the throne or, if she has borne no children, the queen's physiological mother. The unofficial husbands of the queens are brothers chosen from the line of Malegudu (elder brother of Mujaji I), but relationship is not reckoned through them as fathers. Closeness of relationship is important, but personality and opportunity count as much. The most influential councillor is often said to be the queen's mother's brother—in other words, the brother of the deceased queen or, if she has no issue, the brother of the wife of the queen who bore the queen. In fact, however, other relatives rise to equally influential positions. To take a concrete instance, the councillors of Mujaji III have been relatives either through Leakhali, chief wife and 'sister' of Mujaji II and physiological mother of Mujaji III, or through Mujaji II, her mother, Mujaji I, and the latter's brothers, such as Malegudu. Muneri, the chief councillor to-day, is Leakhali's uterine brother's son, and before him there were Mulogwane, uterine brother of the queen, and also Leakhali's uterine brother. Earlier still, but in the present queen's time, the greatest councillors were others tracing descent from Malegudu. There is no precise rule either as to the number or identity of the councillors. The *duna* of the queen should not be a relative; he is merely a messenger, and, unlike the *induna* elsewhere, is of no account, having no special legal or other status or function.

The *khivijɔ* is neither the more or less determinate body of private advisers (*kxotla*), nor even the tribal gathering (*pitshɔ*), of the Sotho. It is mainly constituted by district heads, or their representatives, and the men of the capital, but any one attends; and it is never conceived of as a general assembly of all the initiated men of the tribe. It has little power and less initiative; it is summoned mostly to discuss European matters, and there is now a tendency to place some decisions of the men of the capital before it for confirmation; but it is hardly a means of gauging popular feeling or of expressing the royal will. The co-operation of the tribe is secured and its desires made known, not through the *khivijɔ*, but through other social arrangements, which we shall describe at greater length.

These arrangements run parallel with a distinctive system of wives of the queen, called *vaṭaṛoni*, a term also applied to the wives of all nobles and women other than the queen may have *vaṭanoni*. The majority of the queen's wives are given to her by her district heads. In a sense, these wives are tribute (*va hu lova*), but the queen always gives some *munywalo*. She also receives wives from foreign chiefs who supplicate for rain or for peace, and from headmen who settle in her country and send their daughters or sisters; in these cases no *munywalo* is given. Finally, she is sent wives by the nobles, by those to whom she has given wives or cattle with which to secure wives, and by those who promise their little 'mud-stampers' as repayment for the assistance they ask. Sometimes also the queen takes a liking to a girl and asks her in marriage and sometimes commoners send their daughters. It will be impracticable to deal with all these cases; and, from the point of view of the political organization, we are mainly concerned with the wives sent by district heads. They send their daughters for purposes of *hu lova*, a word used in a wide

[marriage cattle, See cat. 583 for detail.—Analyst]

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643 588 634 785 648 connotation, including the conceptions of showing allegiance, doing homage, paying tribute, honouring, but, above all, supplicating for rain. District heads *lova* in this way, it is said, in recognition of the land which the queen has given them to rule; but what is really important is their dependence, as holders of land of the queen, upon the protection and security of her rain-making powers. Uulovedu, her country, is the land where persons (i.e. wives) and other possessions are utterly lost (*hu lova*), because they are given in exchange for the rain that the queen makes. The queen has accepted wives even from the Shangana-Tonga, with whom marriage is not permitted, but in that case she hands them to her nobles, not as wives, but as daughters; and after a time they become sufficiently Loveduized to be given in marriage to commoners. These wives usually stay at the capital for a limited time; only a few of them, some six to nine to-day, remain permanently; the others are handed chiefly to district heads and nobles.

643 588 While the wives are at the capital they do the work that wives ordinarily do: they hoe for their husband, the queen, who sometimes accompanies them to the fields, they attend to domestic duties, they stamp and brew beer, but only two or three of them are sufficiently noble and trusted to cook for the queen. The queen is bridegroom to their people and they are her relatives-in-law; and even the details of the marriage ceremony are maintained. There are variations upon the ordinary pattern of [831] marriage and *munywalo*; the *munywalo*, for instance, is less, but what is particularly stressed is the virginity of the bride. For a time she wears only a loin cloth as evidence that she is not pregnant and a substitute must be sent for a girl who has been 'spoilt' before marriage with the queen. The first daughter of the district head of Mulloni was 'engaged' to the queen, the second to her cross-cousin, a nobleman. The fiancée of the queen became pregnant and was rejected, the queen arranging an exchange with the nobleman. The same nobleman years ago had been 'given' a wife by the queen and recently in return, as is obligatory, he sent his daughter as wife to the queen. This daughter became pregnant, was allotted to another nobleman, whom she deserted, and now stays with her father nursing an infant of two years of age. Such complications merely throw into relief the ramifications of the system.

643 588 837 554 The queen does not accept 'spoilt' brides and she equally expects that her wives shall remain chaste, at least for a time. Theoretical insistence upon chastity co-exists with a realistic attitude to the weaknesses of human nature. Seduction of a wife of the queen is penalized as if she were still unmarried and the daughter of the queen. Pregnant wives, unless the queen has authorized the liaison, are disgraced, sent home, and returned with beer to wipe out the disgrace, and sometimes an ox is slaughtered for the returned wife, the peritoneum being hung round her neck to indicate that she is the queen's wife. According to the standards of the society, the seducer, as in any ordinary case of seduction, may not marry the woman he has seduced; he may not even see his infant child. Few of the wives of the queen permanently remain chaste, though it is a great honour often very specially rewarded. The great wives, if they remain chaste, may be given areas to rule or special villages of their own.

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If favoured by one of the great councillors, they could be given their own hut (and in the old days a cow into the bargain) and be allowed to cohabit there with the councillor. This gains for them an honourable place in the capital, where they exercise great influence in the private councils of the queen, intercede for others with the queen and are her companions. *Vaṭanoni* of high rank may, as mistresses of their own villages, aspire to the great circle of huts drawn by the establishments of their wives, and they may even attain the pinnacle of prestige where, as happens when the queen is barren, they are chosen to bear the heir to the throne. The lesser *vaṭanoni*, who have remained chaste, may be released from their vows and allowed 'to go about in the bush', and eventually they may be handed out to nobles or district heads.

It is, however, contrary to the ideals expressed for a virgin *muṭanoni* to be given away, though the ideal recedes before other considerations, such as the poverty of a noble or sympathy in a loss he has sustained. Only some of the *vaṭanoni* who have illicit children continue to remain at the capital—for instance, there is an old woman who has a married son about forty years old. She had her lapse when she went on a visit to her home, but no one knows who her lover was. The son still lives with his mother at the capital; as a son of the queen, he is not without influence, but his influence is resented. He and his mother are regarded as witches, and he has many enemies and for long periods has to escape to town to allow threatening storms to blow over. Councillors can hardly afford to allow wives of the queen who have sons to remain permanently: the honour is too great and the opportunities of exploiting their position too numerous. The institutional arrangement of sending *vaṭanoni* with children away to be married to others avoids this danger. The children may, if they are proud, call themselves Mujaji and they are described as 'the heads of Muhale', but legally they are no longer children of the queen and they lose their opportunities for intriguing.

Through her wives, the queen becomes 'son-in-law' to all her district heads, and by allocating these wives to other district heads and to noblemen she becomes parent-in-law to them. The system thus uses the mechanism of the social system to forge a great network of chains radiating from the queen like a web to all strategic points in the society. The link with the queen theoretically never breaks, as a wife handed out must, when she has a daughter, send her in turn to be married by the queen. An important wife, even after allocation, may still enter the queen's hut. The queen remains interested in the welfare of her erstwhile wives and takes them back if the husband ill-treats them or their children. A new link, that of marriage, is created between the people of the wife allocated and of the husband to whom she is given. A man pays no *munywalo* for such a wife, yet the link is a true *munywalo* link; for, if the wife deserts, the husband may, though he has given nothing, demand back *munywalo* from her people (that which the queen gave them). He may complain to the queen, who can, if she wishes, urge his case, but she usually says, 'I can freely give. I cannot return by force.'

How district heads become linked with the queen and with one another may be shown by an illustration which we have greatly simplified for

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ease of presentation. Mavetha, district head of Mareroni, some thirty-eight years ago gave his daughter, Muthatso, to the queen. Muthatso after a time was allotted to Khidima, the queen's maternal uncle.[1] Later Khidima sent a daughter to be one of the wives of the queen and this girl in turn was given by the queen to Nagambi, district head of Maulwi. Meanwhile Mavetha's son, Muhale, succeeded at Mareroni and sent the only issue of his wife, the daughter Makwajo, to the queen (1936). The next ruler at Mareroni will be either Makwajo or an heir raised by the wife acquired with the cattle given by the queen as *munywalo* for Mukwajo. Already these arrangements link the district heads of Mareroni and of Maulwi with the queen and one of her nobles, and also with one another. The network is indefinitely continued in all directions, and though its ends appear to diverge, they centre in the queen and become interlinked at many points. For instance, to Rasodi, a younger brother of Nagambi, the queen gave Makwada, her wife, who came from Malematsha, an important district head, and as a result Rasodi's son must marry at Malematsha's. Once these interrelations are established, they set into motion the whole social system and the reciprocities which double the links and perpetuate the interrelations. In the district of the capital the ramifications of exchanges and re-exchanges are so complex as to defy analysis.

Broadly speaking, districts may be divided into those given to one of the old *kwevo* or royal groups (of Muhale, of Mudiga and of Mahasha), those originating from *vafanomi*, and those held by heads of foreign groups. The so-called *vafanomi* districts constitute a composite group, because women do not normally succeed to one another. We have already mentioned elsewhere how the district Matsui was given by Mujaji I to her wife, who, marrying a Crocodile, was succeeded by her son Matsui and his line of Crocodiles. In 34 per cent. of the 100 districts we know well enough to trace their origin, the position has not been very different. To-day sixty of these 100 districts are held by the royal groups and forty by foreign groups, and of those held by foreigners sixteen were acquired, as Matsui was, through *vafanomi*. Thus 40 per cent. of the foreign and 30 per cent. of the *kwevo* districts, as far as we know, were originally handed to wives of the chiefs. Districts may originate in many other ways. It was customary for the kings to place their districts under sisters and brothers and temporarily also under their wives. Their wives could not as easily as among the queens consolidate their position, as they were unable to send their daughters as wives to the king, whereas now they can and do send such wives to the queens. Districts were also given to the great messengers (*didima*) of the chiefs; to foreigners, who, though they came with no large following, were renowned doctors of the national 'schools', some of which they introduced; to men who gave the queen cattle and a wife, and occasionally to those who had rendered services of value.

It does not much matter how a district originates from the point of view of the links that are gradually established with the queen and with one another. If foreigners come with a large, compact body of followers, they are often given an area and in return send their daughters as wives

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for land would then be regarded more favourably should he one day return. The fruits of the soil are dealt with in much the same manner. A man may graze his cattle inside or outside the district, but the cattle posts of the old days were within the district only. We have mentioned the rivalries of herdboys of different districts; we may add that some district heads, because of traditional values and limited grazing land, object to fencing. District heads sometimes reserve valuable trees for themselves, and it is they who give permission for the cutting down of large and shady trees or indigenous fruit-trees (though they be on the landowner's land). Honey found in trees, but not that found in the ground allotted, belongs to the district head. Some heads allow only residents to cut grass, making others pay. Hunting and water rights are not so regulated, but digging of clay is sometimes, if illegally. The [178] preservation of large forests, a national asset, as places of the gods or of refuge in time of war is the concern of the queen, so that, for instance, Mujaji II had her cattle driven into the gardens of some people, including a district head, who had cleared part of the Levyeni forest and had not begged pardon by sending a *mujanosi* to her.

Some distinctive cultural and administrative arrangements of the districts have already been mentioned. There are many others. All district heads used to have, and many still have, certain fields cultivated for them. The queen also has such fields in her districts, and since 1927 each district head has had to cultivate a field (*muremo*) in his district for the queen, an innovation suggested by the European to enable the queen to help her people during famines. The experiment has turned out very differently. These fields are badly cultivated, for years some district heads bring no mealies, the failure only sporadically leading to the penalization of the head and his district, and the mealies are always converted into beer for entertainments at the capital that benefit only the local residents. The storage of mealies is impracticable and a system of distribution is not implied in cultural arrangements. A district head unwillingly surrenders land and sometimes expropriates first one then another landowner, so that there is much dissatisfaction and even refusal to cultivate the *muremo*.

In many respects district heads are like chiefs. They are often called 'chief' (*khosi*) and, like the queen, have medicines to safeguard them in their position of authority. A district head is not only the most important person in the district, the centre of its political and legal life, the man who is responsible for the welfare of his people, but the obligations of district residents towards him emphasize both his position and the reciprocities between ruler and subject. It is expected that his subjects shall bring him beer periodically, and sometimes it is held that he should be invited to every beer party held in his area, partly because he is responsible for order at the beer drink and partly because it is his due. All his subjects must make *morula* cider for him in the proper season, and similarly, when at certain ceremonies, held by him for the well-being of the district, beer is required, every resident must contribute. The most important [illegible] is at the harvest thanksgiving and the beer brought is [illegible] as being in return for the land given by the head to his people. On the pattern of

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of thrift, strict control of beer-drinks, interest in national affairs, of pride and independence. Of course, a great deal depends upon the personality of the district head, but traditions in the district are not unimportant.

Districts are not always left to go their own way. In the last resort, as in legal matters, the authority of the capital may be invoked, and it may be invoked even against a whole district. Just as a district may collectively take action against a threat to its well-being, as occurred in the small-pox epidemic in 1938, when one district assembled and collected funds to have the witch who was causing the deaths smelt out, so it may be held collectively responsible by the capital for failure to cultivate the chief's field. This is the more striking because there is no kraal responsibility and the so-called 'spoor law' (whereby a kraal head, unwilling or unable to explain why the track of stolen cattle leads to but does not leave his kraal is held responsible, whoever the thief in his kraal might be) is not known. We have seen a district fined, never a kraal. The queen has theoretically to confirm the expulsion of a subject: in cases referred to a diviner, the 'ears' or official witness should be, but is not always, appointed at the queen's court. In practice, however, the queen seldom interposes her authority. For years now no one knows who is head at Dithejine, the balance swinging unevenly between three claimants. At Maḓarabani, Muteze, who persistently refused to do homage (*hu lova*) to the queen with beer, was deposed; but that there were other considerations at issue appears from the fact that immediately afterwards he was installed at Uukhuda. When Thagu at Khimarila in 1936 expelled his paternal uncle's son for whom he was deputizing, nothing was done. At Ralselaga when the head died, the messenger (*duna*) took over, ruled for years without confirmation from the capital and in 1938 was recognized (because his son became valuable as driver of the councillor's newly acquired motor car), the real heir being quietly overlooked. Not long ago the nobles at a tribal gathering carried their point that only royal relatives should be appointed as district heads on the farms that were being purchased, but the rule remained a dead letter and of the ten heads appointed in these areas eight are foreigners.

In its visible structure, the political organization may appear unimpressive and in its dynamics chaotic. Its efficiency certainly is and always was—for it is not culture contact that is responsible for the irregularities—of an order different from ours. Efficiency is relative to the purposes of the culture. The aim has never been power or empire, but holding subjects together on the model of the social organization. The slight regimentation of the 'schools' subserves no political or military purpose, and court life is not concerned with displays, nor is it characterized by differentiated officials and courtiers controlling a great central organization. Unlike the Shangana-Tonga, the Lovedu cannot deal with large gatherings of men such as collected on Coronation Day in 1937. The genius of the society is in organizing relationships between people, and as long as the reciprocity and compromise and the sentiments built up by interdependencies are reasonably maintained, it does not much matter that irregularities occur here and there. The influence of the

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CHAPTER XI

THE GENIUS OF JURIDICAL ADJUSTMENTS

Conciliation machinery at the capital—quasi-judicial systems of appeasement—reliance in full-dress trials and sanctions upon agreement and compromise—procedure in 'blood' cases—appeals to ordeals and diviners.

692 671 THE genius of the Lovedu political system is its network of reciprocities; the genius of the legal system is its procedure of reconciliations and compromises; and both the political and legal systems reflect the main emphases and purposes of the culture. *Khɔrɔ* proceedings, the full-dress trials of the Lovedu, stand out conspicuously amid the various judicial arrangements, some of which we may be inclined to call quasi-judicial, but in reality none of our legal terms are appropriate. Their *khɔrɔ* is court-like, but it is not a court in our sense of the term; their law is law-like, not the equivalent of our law. All the procedures aim, not at settling legal issues, but at effecting compromises and reconciliations. The *khɔrɔ* itself, the most imposing feature of public life and the pinnacle of the cultural edifice, relies, not on force, but on friendly adjustments. It is the courtyard of compromises, not the arena of casuistic contests. It disposes of no sanction of execution: coercion is incongruous with its purposes. Culture contact has weakened the effectiveness of compromise and thereby has rendered necessary what it denies to the *khɔrɔ*—namely, the sanction of force.

692 In this chapter we deal briefly with the organization of the *khɔrɔ* and then touch lightly upon certain quasi-judical processes. These lead us to cast a passing glance first at *khɔrɔ* procedure and thereafter at various other types of procedure which centre, not in the *khɔrɔ*, but in other arrangements such as those involved in settling 'blood' cases and in dealing with the deeds of darkness by divination and the ordeal. All these procedures are part of the legal machinery, but they can be understood only as part also of the whole social structure. A comprehensive account of them is out of the question; we have no time even for a glimpse at substantive law.

692 643 The queen is at the head of the *khɔrɔ* organization. She never sits in the *khɔrɔ*, for it is the courtyard of the men. But she is always in the background, and in theory all decisions at the capital should be reported to, and confirmed by her. Five years ago, when the queen's uterine brother still lived and was a councillor, this was no formality, but to-day only very serious cases or decisions are submitted for her verdict or confirmation. This divergence from the ideal is due to conflicts, fear of involving the queen with European authorities, and a growing desire to reserve *khɔrɔ* affairs to the men. The queen's approval is still sought, always when the dispute involves the position or status of a royal relative, often when a district head expels a subject, and sometimes when a recalcitrant party is to be sent to the Native Commissioner or when one

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of the parties objects to the decision of the *khoro*. It is the queen's prerogative to settle disputes between royal relatives, but she also privately settles differences which, for reasons of public policy or of the prestige of the parties, should not be publicly discussed, and sometimes, to avoid the hardening of transient differences into permanent hostility, even withdraws cases, especially witchcraft cases, from the jurisdiction of the *khoro*. The queen has an unshakable reputation for integrity, and acts independently, if she likes, though often she consults trusted advisers, some of whom at present are not her councillors.

The role of the queen is not unconnected with the institution of 'mothers' of districts. 'Mothers' are appointed by the queen or with her approval, and are usually her relatives, living at the capital and having direct access to her. Generally they report in the first instance to the councillors, especially to the son of the queen's mother's brother, who is the greatest councillor. The office of 'mothers', though hereditary, often changes hands because of its responsibilities and inadequate rewards, the opportunities of favourably placed persons and the requirement of residence at or near the capital. Often a widow, familiar with her husband's arrangements, takes over the position, enlisting the help of a relative, who at her death naturally steps into her shoes. Since the fees received cannot meet the needs of taxpayers, usually only old people are 'mothers', but inability to cope with long journeys forces them to entrust some of their work to available sons or relatives, who in turn may succeed to the position. 'Mothers' are often related to, but may be only fortuitously linked with, the heads of districts under their charge. A foreign chief or headman may be introduced at the capital by a friend or relative or stranger, who thereupon becomes his 'mother'. In 1912, when a colony of settlers from Basutoland came, Mashaveli, who had no previous association with them, took the message of their arrival to the queen and henceforth acted as their 'mother'. Independent foreign chiefs also have their 'mothers', who sometimes live far from the capital.

'Mothers' have politico-legal and other functions. They receive their 'children', the district heads or foreign chiefs, and act as intermediaries whenever formal relations with the queen or great councillors are involved. When it is impracticable for a district head to bring beer to the queen, he may send mealies, which are deposited at the 'mother's' and there converted into the tributary beer. The arrival of beer from a district is always reported to the 'mother', who receives one calabash. 'Mothers' are the messengers or ambassadors of the queen sent to settle disputes among their 'children' or to represent her, for instance, at the formal installation of a district head. Important links in politics, they are the master links in the legal system. Some 'mothers' supervise the legal interrelations of many districts with the capital. As some districts are far off, eight to ten miles, they may delegate the work, in respect of some districts or of some of its aspects, to others, such as sons, wives, sister's sons, or wife's brothers. Thus Khidima, 'mother' of Mavulana, Maraga, Madumani, Gabiani, Musugududzi, and a European-owned farm, sometimes puts cases coming from the first three districts in the hands of his sister's son, but, since Khidima's own son has reached years

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CHAPTER XV

THE RAIN CULT

The rain-queen in her sphere of safeguarding the seasons—technique of transforming the clouds—evils that cause 'heat' and act as impediments to rain—'cooling' rites counteracting the 'heat' of the earth.

As the centre of the agricultural cycle, rain is the focus of many human interests; as the elixir of life, it is one of the ultimate bases of man's sense of security; and as a manifestation of celestial grace, it is the supreme justification of the divine right of the queen to rule. The queen is primarily not a ruler, but a rain-maker, and men rely for their security, not on regimentation, armies, and organization, but on the queen's power to make rain for the tribe and to withhold rain from its enemies. All ultimate reliances are based upon the magico-religious world, and rain-making and its cult are an important part of that world. The rain cult is not composed of a few magical passes made by the queen; it is a whole complex of institutions with ramifications through many aspects of tribal life. The cult is not confined to measures taken to secure rain in times of drought; its observances must be kept at all times and a good year involves as much care on the part of the queen as a bad one.

The chief actor in the rain cult is the queen. During life, she is not merely the Transformer of the Clouds, but she is regarded as the changer of the seasons and guarantor of their cyclic regularity; when she dies, the seasons are out of joint and drought is inevitable. Her very emotions affect the rain: if she is dissatisfied, angry, or sad, she cannot work well, and in 1934–5, when the first rains did not come till December, the drought was attributed to her being upset at her daughter's liaison with a commoner. Her rain-making is not confined to dramatic ceremonies in time of severe drought; it is conceived of as continuous care throughout the summer. Furthermore, the Lovedu do not attribute every fall of rain to some special activity or volition on the part of their queen, but rather believe that the queen exercises some general control or care which ensures a good season.

Such being the powers of the queen, she is the person to be approached when there is no rain, not only at the beginning of the season, but any time during the summer in a country in which three weeks' drought might ruin the maize crop. There are various ways of doing this. Great councillors or important relatives may approach the queen in person, saying, 'The people are crying,' and asking her to help them. When there was no rain, Mugwena, related to the queen through his mother, used to walk near the queen's hut complaining, in a voice calculated to reach the royal ears, that it was a bad thing for the chief to kill his people by withholding rain. When the first summer storm of 1937 opened with much lightning and thunder, the two chief councillors mentioned informally to the queen at beer that they hoped she would ward off wind and thunder and give them a good year. Heads of districts approach the queen (*hu lova*) with a gift, usually nowadays of £1 or £1 10*s*., and very often

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643 789 535 821 bring with them in addition dancing performers (*gɔsha*) to please her and to evoke her pity at the sorrowful sight of people dancing in summer when they ought to be ploughing. The movements of this dancing do not differ from those of ordinary dancing, but the music consists of *lesugu* songs sung also at the annual harvest ceremony, on the death of important royal people, and at the girls' initiation 'school'.

643 789 535 533 821 The most renowned of all dancing for rain is the *legɔbathɬe*, a special kind of *gɔsha*, the mourning dance of a section of Thɔvɔlɔ people living under one of the district heads, Mavulana. It is more dignified, its movements slower and more stately, and its drumming more subdued than in an ordinary *gɔsha*. So lightly are the drums struck that the clear, silvery, varied tones of the reed pipes ring out like the peal of bells. Only two drums are used, and none but those who have lost at least one parent may perform, and it is begun in the dim light of the dawn before sunrise, when, after a short spell, it stops and is resumed later in the day. When some one person has greatly angered the queen, and drought is believed to be due to her displeasure on this account, the married women from all the villages in the royal neighbourhood assemble every morning after cooking to dance, singing, 'We are being killed on account of a bogyman in skins' (*re vulaiwa gi Madikadyana di vɬɬvɛ̨ana*). Grandmothers nurse the babies and encourage the younger women with their trillings and dancing movements. The dust rises high and by sunset they are black with dirt and sweat; but next day and the next they come again, sometimes for as long as a week, till rain falls or continued drought makes it clear that some other cause is operating as well. The great hardship this dancing entails (for nursing mothers who perform have no time to feed their babies) is thought to melt the heart of the queen. Too much rain, as well as too little, is laid at the door of the queen. On one occasion, when it had rained almost incessantly for six weeks, the chief councillor said in the presence of the queen, 'Fat does not fill the pot' (*makhura a a ɖale bija*), meaning that there can be too much of a good thing—a hint to the queen to regulate things better.

643 789 821 There is no belief that is stronger in the tribe even to-day than that in the power of the queen to transform the clouds. This does not, however, mean that they do not recognize the regularity of the seasons. People know that the month of February is generally the rainiest in the year; that the month *Morenane* (October), when the Southern Cross sets just before bedtime, is the time when the first rains are approaching, and no one would *lova* rain in winter any more than Europeans would organize a day of prayer for rain in that season. Yet if rain does not come at its proper time or the season is generally bad, it may be said, 'The queen has not changed the hoeing season [i.e. the year] nicely' (*a va fedula ledzema ha vutse*); for if the cycle of seasons is considered inevitable, whether the new year is brought in propitiously or otherwise is in the hands of the queen.

643 791 Though renowned as the greatest rain-maker in South Africa, Mujaji never works alone. She always has a rain-doctor, of whom there are many in the tribe, to work with her. She chooses any renowned doctor, but may change him for another if people complain that the rain is bad—

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that is, insufficient or accompanied by too many thunderstorms. For these deficiencies, the queen herself is never blamed. The chief function of the doctor is to co-operate with the queen in some of the things she cannot do: he divines the causes of drought and discovers which forces are hindering the queen's power from taking effect; and, using his own medicines, he aids her in removing these causes and setting right what is wrong. The relation between rain-doctors and the queen is interesting. They are specialists in their art, which they have inherited from their fathers, and are even consulted independently by outside tribes. Khishidwa, the queen's own rain-doctor, is often called by Nwamitwa, the Shangana-Tonga chief, in time of drought, and Tshivulane, a Venda chief, comes, not to *lova* Mujaji, but to call Levea, a rain-doctor on a farm within her jurisdiction. Any payments they receive are their own. Yet these doctors themselves unreservedly state that in the last resort they are dependent on the queen: if she stays their hands, their powers will avail them nothing. It is said, 'If the chief holds the rain from falling, the doctor cannot cause rain' (*hc khosi a ga tswara bula hore e khi ne, Daga e ga se nese*). A rain-doctor sent by the queen to make rain for a Venda chief who came to *lova* once in our presence urged the chief councillor, 'Tell the queen not to hold my hands.' In addition to the chief's right-hand man in rain activities, there are certain lesser rain-doctors whom she employs as her messengers when outside tribes *lova* rain, for she would never dream of giving a suppliant medicine to take back with him. These messengers, though sent by the queen, are, strange as it seems to us, not given any medicine or charm to use in their rain-making. It is considered enough that they come from her, and their payment is the entertainment they receive at the foreign court.

What the queen does to transform the clouds and the exact nature of the objects and medicines associated with her work are enshrouded in the greatest secrecy. It is doubtful whether any one other than the queen herself is in possession of this secret, for it is bound up with the title and power to succeed to the throne. The secrets are always imparted to the successor just prior to the death of the chief, and on occasion in Lovedu traditional history the would-be usurper, to whom the secrets had not been entrusted, has been deposed in favour of the 'chosen' heir. The queen's rain medicines are kept in rough earthen pots (*mehago*) in a part of the village to which few have access. Some of their power is said to derive from a human skull in the rain-pot, and there are horns which are kept in a hut. When these rain-horns (*dinaga ja bula*) are placed on the ground, rain falls; when they are hung up, it clears up and is dry. The medicine in the rain-horns is said, when burnt, to produce smoke which rises up in the air to draw and to produce the clouds. The technique is not unlike *leshwava*, luck medicine, which when burnt draws customers to traders and touts. Associated with the rain cult are the *gomana* drums the beating of which in former times was believed to bring rain, but the true *gomana* ceremonies have not been held for about thirty years. The rain cult to-day is largely confined to observances connected with the queen and her medicines or charms (*dithugula*).

The chief ingredient of the rain-pots is the skin of the deceased chief

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and of important councillors who are her closest relatives: when a chief dies the body is left for some days in the hut, so that, when it is rubbed in a certain way (*hu fɔrɔlwa*), the skin easily comes away. Other ingredients are fat of the scaly ant-eater (*khwara*), a royal animal which, when found, has always to be brought alive to the royal village, and parts of the kudu (*thɔlɔ*). The queen's rain-doctor told us that essential ingredients were sea-water, because it foams and froths (*hu pukula*), feathers of the lightning bird, white and black sea shells, and various roots and barks, chief among which is the stem of the *khadi* (*Adenia gumnifera*), a tough forest creeper that contains much water. *Khadi* stems are also used for sprinkling 'cooling' medicines and for tying the bodies of dead people. Whether the queen uses these ingredients, we cannot say. From time to time a black sheep is killed to give strength to the queen's rain medicines; it has to be washed with water which is afterwards poured into the rain pots, but it is said that such a sheep is merely a present-day substitute for a human being, usually a child, whose brains were used. Important district heads related to the chief also have their rain-pots. Every year in about August, at the command of the queen, such a district head collects certain roots and barks, knowledge of which he has received from his father, places them in his rain-pot, mixed with water that has been drawn by girls below the age of puberty, and stirs them up so that rain may be good that year. Rain-pots are great secrets and only after years of friendship were we privileged to see one: it was well hidden in the cleft of a rock and partly buried at the foot of a tree on the upper slopes of a hill where the owner's father had dwelt. The rain-pots of the queen we have not seen, and what regular measures she takes are not known for certain; but, since it is said, when there are good rains, that the queen has firmly laid the foundations (*hu thea*) of the year, it is not unlikely that she also stirs her medicines.

Great care has to be taken lest the rain-pots 'weaken' (*hu figɛhɛla*). They have to be given (*hu lumiswa*, to cause to be bitten) the first green foods (*mutshatsha*) every year, kaffir water melon (*legwadzi*) mixed with other green foods being used for the purpose, and at the royal village no one cooks and eats the new summer relishes before this has been done. On this day possessed people or people who have epilepsy also eat medicine with the firstfruits, but ordinary people do not *luma*, and there are none of the public festivities of a semi-military character associated with the eating of the firstfruits among Swazi and Zulu. It is very important too that the first termites (*dinnʈwa*), which appear usually in December, just after the first good rains, should be given to the rain-pots. Termites are closely associated with rain: they always fly out of their nests just after the rain; in a dry year there are very few; and it is believed that sprinkling the antheap with rain medicine (*mufugo*) makes the ants come in great numbers. Termites for the rain-pots may not be gathered by married women or girls over the age of puberty, and in 1937, when some young girls carried the first termites to the queen, she gave the termites to the dogs, refusing to use ants that had been thus defiled. The giving of the first termites to the rain-pots is called *bulane*. An interesting case arose out of this practice in January, 1938, when certain people in Duthudi

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area ate termites before the *bulane* of the head. An inquiry was held by the district head and four men were fined two goats each. They were told that, if their case had come before the queen herself, they would have had to pay a head of cattle. Only the few sub-areas under the immediate jurisdiction of the queen herself send termites to the queen; in other areas they send to their own head, and there is no rule that the queen's own rain-charms should be given before others.

The powers of the queen to make rain are not absolute. The queen can control rain only 'in agreement with her ancestors' who are able, if they wish, to stay her hand just as she herself is able to stay the hands of rain-doctors. There are also certain things that, by causing the rain charms to become 'weak' (*figchela*), have power to stop the rain unless proper measures are taken. It has already been shown how heat is associated with illness and things being wrong. If a person has been burned to death or struck by lightning, he must be buried in a wet place near the river or his grave 'cooled' with special medicine obtained from the chief, lest drought ensues. Similarly, abortions or miscarriages, women dying in pregnancy or childbirth, twins killed at birth, babies dying before cutting their teeth or cutting the upper teeth before the lower, initiates dying in the circumcision lodge—all must be buried in a wet place.

Since an electrical storm often means little or no rain, it is believed that 'sending' lightning to kill one's enemies, a common practice of witches, spoils the country by preventing rain. Hence at a tribal gathering (*khivijo*), held in the spring of 1937–8, the people were told among other things that the chief does not want to see 'lightning of people' (as opposed to natural lightning); any district head hearing of anything like this among his people was to report at once to the queen. A common phenomenon in time of drought is the banking up of heavy rain clouds with all the promise of a soaking rain, only to be dispersed by wind. Anything associated with winds is thus thought to prevent rain. That is why witches, by hanging *lefalaja-maru*—literally, 'disperser of the clouds' (*Asparagus plumosis*)—or an ordinary broom on a branch where it will sway in the air, can disperse the clouds; and any one dying of a coughing disease, such as *ɖere* or consumption, must be buried in wet soil or soil that has been sprinkled with *mufugo* medicine. If abortions or people dying of a coughing disease are buried without these precautions, the grave is called *pukudi* (from *hu pukula*, which perhaps is the opposite of *hu fuga*, to blow upon by a cool breeze, to sprinkle with cooling medicine). *Pukudi* contains the conception of wind issuing upwards or hot air quivering above a heated surface. As soon as the vapour-laden air reaches the grave, it stops or dissolves in the wind and it is even believed that the corpse, thrusting up an arm, waves it about to cause the wind that drives away the rain.

How dangerous wind is considered to be in setting at naught the efforts of the queen was well illustrated on November 15th, 1937. On that day, after propitious black clouds had been dispersed by a gale that lifted the thatch off many a hut, it was proclaimed that the following day had to be a holiday. People said, '*Gi khumcla*' (it is a 'turning back' before the goal

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girls below the age of puberty are sent to draw water for the *mufugo* which the queen's rain-doctor prepares for the occasion, and after a day or two, when the medicine froths up (*hu pukula*), boys are sent with a horn of *mufugo* and a brush of *khadi* creeper (*Adenia gummifera*) to every village in the land. First they heat medicine on the fire of the men's courtyard and thereafter on the threshold and hearth of every hut. The ashes are cleared away by an old woman, for so dangerous is the medicine used that any man, woman, or child entering the hut before it has been smeared with dung will *khuma* and be unable to have children. A new fire is kindled in the men's courtyard, whence each woman fetches a brand for her own hut, for it is taboo to kindle a fire from any other. In return for her firebrand, each woman gives the men stamped mealies or groundnuts, which they eat in the *khɔrɔ*. Each married man in turn must give something to the boys who have brought *mufugo*, usually 1*s*. or a fowl (in the old days an arrow or mealies), but often also tobacco or other gifts for, as '*mufugo* does not choose' (*mufugo a u khɛthe*), anything may be given. Each boy must give 1*s*. or a fowl to the keeper of *mufugo*, keeping the rest as a reward for his labours. It is taboo to work in the fields on the day after *mufugo*. In 1927 some boys, too lazy to fetch the medicine, took matters into their own hands and made a mixture of ash and water, which they used in their rounds. They were discovered and made to pay five head of cattle each and the ceremony had to be performed again.

When the divining bones diagnose drought as due to ancestors, steps have to be taken for a sacrifice at an ancestral grave. Any one of the close relatives of the queen can cause drought: sometimes it is the queen's mother Leakhali, buried at Khaḍa; sometimes it is Mugɔdɔ's sister, buried at Mudzinoni; in 1925–6 it was Mulogwane, the queen's brother, who complained that he was buried in the Christian cemetery, instead of in the shade of the forest. A sacrifice for rain will take place only after it has become clear that, in spite of steps taken to *lova* the queen by means of money or dancing, she fails by her ordinary methods to cause the rain to fall.

January, 1938, was hot and dry. Several headmen had been to *lova*, but no rain fell. Important district heads and councillors thus began to 'travel about, having the bones thrown', to discover the cause, while the queen herself also sent messengers to various well-known diviners. The reply came, 'Seek ye a black sheep. Go with it to show your care for the spirits and you shall see that it will rain nicely.' As is so often the case, no indication was given of the cause of their complaint; the suggestion as to the practical measures to be taken and the identity of the troublesome spirits were quite sufficient. The queen, however, remained inactive; it was not for her to take the initiative till her people humbly begged her to do so. On February 11th three of the most important men at the capital approached her, saying, 'People are crying. Help us.' Thereupon she impatiently replied, 'People tire me. The year was well established, but they have "weakened" (*hu figchɛla*) it. They want me to be troubled.' She implied that she had safeguarded the year, but that the people themselves, by breaking rain taboos and by their evil works and witchcraft, had undermined that safeguard. When the councillors continued

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787 pleading, she relented and said, 'Find me a black sheep without blemish
643 [colour].' The first messenger they sent returned without success, but
789 two others were dispatched to scour the country and on the seventeenth one was found. Kheshidwa, the rain-doctor, was now called. Four days passed, but he did not come. Then the queen, angry at the delay, suggested that she should proceed with the ceremony alone. But this the councillors would not hear of; 'You might deviate from the procedure the bones indicate to be essential,' they said. On the fifth day, however, Kheshidwa arrived, explaining his delay as due to the number of medicines he had to find, and at dawn on February 23rd the ceremony took place.

643 A calabash containing *mufugo* was placed in a basket for the chief wife
789 of the queen's brother to carry, and a procession of most of the inmates of the royal village set out with the sheep. They stopped first at a clump of trees near the village, where lies Moyavudupi, a female relative by marriage to the queen on the mother's brother's side. When the queen ordered her chief councillor, as direct representative of the mother's brother's side, to begin, he uncorked the calabash and poured some of its contents over the grave, saying, 'Stop for us these winds and tribulations, that it may rain nicely. They say it is you people whose murmurings are impeding the rain.' His younger sister next took the calabash, praying in almost identical words, followed by the queen herself, who said, 'Aye, we say, stop for us all these *pukudi* [winds from wrong burials] that rain may fall and people find corn.' The people now respectfully greeted (*hu lɔsha*), repeating the praise of Muhale, the king of old, and, during the trillings that followed, the rain-doctor said, 'The frogs do not cry, sire. I do not hear them'; he may have meant that it was so dry that even the frogs were silent, but we do not know for certain.

The procession now proceeded to Maulwi, the sacred grove where are buried members of the royal family and the two last queens. At the grave of Mathakha, mother's brother to the queen and father of the chief councillor, they all sat down while the same procedure was gone through as at the other grave. When it was the queen's turn to pray, she took a small horn wrapped up in rags and placed it on the grave. Then, pouring from the calabash, she prayed, 'Do not continue to hold my arms; leave me to do my things, that rain may fall and people have corn. Tell one another, tell every single one, also the old woman [meaning Leakhali, her mother] and Mujaji, "huckster in the hut", who "casts away some and shares others with the vultures" [Mujaji I]. Do not continue leaving us to be burnt by the sun. As for our health, we are reasonably well; we are merely troubled by the poverty you have left us.' She poured out all the *mufugo*, turning the calabash upside down beside the horn, while the assembled company did obeisance and ululated. The sheep was slaughtered and skinned and small pieces, cut from various parts of the body, were placed in an earthen bowl while the doctor, sitting some distance away, began squeezing the stomach contents to separate the liquid from the more solid part. When he had finished, the chief councillor, his sister, and the queen placed the meat on the grave, telling the gods, 'We approach (*hu suma*) you with this sheep.' The solid stomach contents

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were placed on the grave, the assembled people greeted and trilled as before, the queen took away her little horn from the grave, and they all departed, carrying the sheep to an open spot some distance from the grave. Here they kindled a large fire and began cooking the meat in two large pots, one containing the internal organs (*mala*) and head, which, on this occasion, are not to be eaten by women of child-bearing age. Normally *mala* of a slaughtered animal are the portion *par excellence* of the women. While the meat was cooking, the doctor took a potsherd containing the 'water' of the stomach contents, his medicine bags and a stick of *khadi* creeper, and proceeded alone to the grave. It is surmised that he must have made a hole in the grave to pour down the water and medicine.

Meanwhile the clouds which had been in the sky at dawn had thickened and, while the pots were still cooking, rain fell and extinguished the fires, which had to be rekindled. The meat was eaten on the spot by all present and just before they all departed the bones were collected, wrapped in the skin, and placed on the grave. Prior to this, however, the doctor had spoken seriously to the councillors to approach the chief about the *pukudi* in the valley below, where a woman who had died in childbirth had been buried 'in the open' without *mufugo*. Ten days later the doctor was called to set the matter right.

This sacrifice is exceedingly rare, but it illustrates well the significant and usual intermingling of religious with what we should call purely magical rites. Thus, as the prayer is offered, it is rain medicine, which works by magic, not beer, the food of the gods, that is poured. The royal grave is treated, not to propitiate the gods, but to constrain them, to keep them cool, so that they will be unable to stop the rain. The sheep is an offering to the gods, a tangible indication that men still 'care for' their ancestors, but the use of the stomach contents on the grave falls into the magical pattern. Another point worth mentioning is that the queen was only one of several officiators: even her divinity does not give her precedence over the nearest living descendants in approaching the complaining spirits.

It has been shown that a great variety of steps can be taken to procure rain, their nature depending upon what is believed to be causing the drought. If the queen herself is thought responsible, and this is usually believed to be the case in the first instance, then her subjects will *lova* her with gifts or dances to excite her pity and to please her. If there have been wrong burials and rain taboos have been broken, these must be righted, while if the trouble comes from the ancestors, they must be placated. Sometimes one finds a combination of causes, but always it is the divining bones which decide what steps are to be taken. There are rain rites throughout the season, for not only may there be good rain in one area and not in another, but an inopportune period of drought in the best of seasons may have drastic effects on the crops. As an indication of the type of action taken in connexion with the rain cult in any one season, the following has been taken from our diary for the season 1937–8, by no means a very bad year, but one in which the rainfall was below the average:

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as if it were a foreign conception, that no *njugo* beans should be planted during the year following the death of a chief. The association of rain and *njugo* beans seem to belong to a culture complex coming from the south.

The insistence nowadays is upon studying culture change as if it were a phenomenon important only in its relation to European contacts, but there has always been and there still is culture change of a different and, as far as the Lovedu are concerned, more vital nature. Even in the rain cult there have been changes. In the reign of Mujaji II, when the father of Kheshidwa succeeded Ramafalo as rain-maker, he instituted *hu runa*, a new ceremony of medicating all hoes with *mufugo* before the hoeing of the queen's field of eleusine, a practice which has fallen into disuse with the recent abandonment of the queen's hillside field for one in the valley which can be ploughed. The breaking of taboos is not necessarily a reflection of the breakdown and decay of custom. Indeed, the technique of the rain cult was based on the assumption that taboos were broken. Breaches account for drought and the counter-vailing efficacy of the queen's measures explains her reputation and the confidence people have in her. Wrong burials are known to prevent rain, but, since people try to avoid the unpleasant publicity involved in getting *mufugo* for the burial of, say, an abortion or in burying it in a wet place, these wrong burials are always taking place.

Neither European contact nor Christianity has succeeded in breaking down the implicit belief of every member of the tribe in the power of the queen to make rain. True, no Christians take part in ceremonies for rain and some do not believe that such things as wrong burials affect rainfall; but they harmonize the new with the old faith by the rationalization that the queen makes rain with the help of God, for they have all seen and can cite corroborative evidence for the powers of the queen. That the queen herself is honest and genuinely believes not only in her own powers, but also in the outside influences that prevent her from achieving success, can be seen in the reply she gave to the messengers who came on February 19th, 1938, with £1 10s. from a one-time district head in her kingdom to beg for rain. 'Go,' she said, 'and tell the master of Muduveni that we are trying, but things will just not come right' (arrangements were being made for a sacrifice to the ancestors for rain). The money, however, was kept.

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other way of life can oust it from its general pre-eminent position. The man or woman who is in need of a pot or other article in the busy agricultural season vainly places an order with a craftsman, and 'He who takes a journey in spring must transact all his affairs' (i.e. not only where he goes, but also on the way), for he will not be able to pass by again during that season.

Agriculture provides the immediate security of the people, but in turn it relies upon the life-giving rain, the power to make which has been projected upon the queen. The queen is thus the foundation stone of the security of the cultural structure. Her rain-making powers safeguard not only agriculture against the caprices of nature, but the whole country against the attacks of its enemies. The queen is more than that: the method of supplicating for rain has merged with the mechanisms of the social structure and has constructed the bonds with the districts, thus, despite political decentralization, securing the unity of the tribe. And, finally, the elevation of a woman to this exalted position has strengthened the status of women and their important role in the society and has emphasized the virtue of feminine qualities. But the queen is not conceived to be intimately linked with everything in the culture: her position in the *khɔrɔ* of the men is weakly institutionalized, she has no immediate contact with the European administration to the interferences of which her powers are doubly vulnerable, and the welfare of the cattle elsewhere, as among the Maḍala and Xananwa, ritually brought into relation with the chief, is outside her province.

As rain-maker, the queen controls half the great cosmic forces. Magic may be invoked, the gods propitiated, in the interests and for the ends of individuals, but ultimately these interests and ends and the destiny of the society depend upon the mediation and will of the queen. Man's sense of security in the face of personal misfortunes can be re-established by magic or religion, but the orderliness of cosmic laws is guaranteed only by the relationship of the queen with the supernatural. These laws are inscrutable, but the procedures for arousing pity in the heart of a human queen or for appeasing her anger are intelligible; and thus man can have confidence in undertaking his tasks. Moreover, he need not and must not resort to magic in his major economic activities, for he can and must rely upon the queen. Since the final justification of the pivotal position of the queen is her divinity, garden magic is conceived to be disruptive, like witchcraft: it competes with the power of the queen. One consequence of this conception is that success or failure in subsistence activities is regarded as immediately dependent upon industry, the application of practical knowledge and suitable materials, and that he who uses garden magic is a thief or a witch.

In most neighbouring tribes there is some public treatment of the seeds before they are sown, or the hoes and ploughs are smeared with medicine obtained from the chief: among highveld Sotho such as the Xananwa and Moletshe, there is even a special hut for storing the sacred seed, a few grains of which are handed to each householder at sowing time, and in this hut, which is associated with the *gɔma* drums and with fertility in man, girls reaching puberty are isolated and newly married

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241 couples sleep for the first few nights. Among the Lovedu these practices
789 have no counterpart. Given rain, what is necessary to make the crops prosper is work and good soil, not medicine, and as a result one receives the impression of a practical attitude, not only to agriculture, but, by extension, also to most economic activities. But success both in hunting and in pastoral activities to some extent depends upon the use of magic, although by comparison with the Nguni and Tswana the cattle cult is very much attenuated.

461 Thrift and industry are regarded as virtues. It is the hard-working bride who is sought after, while the most eligible bridegrooms are the *dibuḓu*, those who by industry have filled their grain pits. But what is valued is not just work; it is work to attain self-sufficiency, that will make one independent, rather than work which places one in a subservient position. Even, as they phrase it, 'In work for the chief, it is only the fool who kills himself'. Hard work must not be thought of in terms of our conceptions, for the outlook of the Lovedu is far less dominated by intensive striving and deep concentration and more by care-free, easy-going standards than ours. Work has dignity, for the maxim, 'It is not the gift-pumpkin [but the produce of one's own garden] that is juicy', is meant, not to deprecate the gift, but to foster pride in the products of one's labour; it is a tenet appropriately urged when the clothes which a youth displays have been acquired, not by his own efforts, but as a present from his parents. Work is accorded recognition: the child who begins herding is said also to begin to deserve the food he gets. Work excuses failures and losses, for as they say, 'The one who loses cattle is the one who herds them', or, more generally, 'The one who breaks is the one who works'. On the other hand, there is scorn of indolence in the proverb, 'The sluggard has no locusts even if they sleep in his courtyard', and a warning in 'He who sits with staring eye-balls [idly] will die, but he who scratches for food [cultivates assiduously] will live'. Considering the craving for beer, it is almost heroic for a man, when refused this elixir of life, to console himself with the thought that 'He who stints me is he who helps me' [because I shall better be able to attend to my work]. But the work that is honoured and considered most congenial is work in situations in which, as in the work party, the reciprocities are fundamental.

● 643 The weakness of the queen as a woman is also her strength and the
648 source of the prestige of the tribe. Her foreign policy is appeasement, not war; for, as they phrase it, 'The queen does not fight'. Reciprocity is the basis of her relations with her district heads, reconciliation the method of settling difficulties. Appeasement, one of the great values in the society, harmonizes with, supports, and is in turn supported by the reliance of the whole social structure upon compromise. This value and the traits corresponding to it interpenetrate every aspect of culture and of life. The hard régime of the initiation 'school' has been softened: there is no need to direct its procedures towards hardening the youth or instilling manly courage, and military discipline and regimentation are of little or no importance. Diplomacy works hand in hand with the
157 methods of the *khɔrɔ* and of reconciliation (*hu khumɛlwa*), but it also

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have broken away from Lovedu overlordship since the beginning of the twentieth century, Vulovedu has been crowded and its borders surrounded by Shangana-Tonga.

It is manifestly impossible to examine in detail the nature and magnitude of the changes in Lovedu culture that may be attributed to the Sotho substratum, Venda, Laudi, Shangana-Tonga, and other tribes. We may, however, as an illustration, cursorily trace the evolution, under these influences, of the Lovedu royal complex of institutions. The germs of this complex come from the ancestors of the royal group. The Portuguese record that only a man without physical imperfections could become chief and that the Mambo handed his daughters to his bodyguard, who gave in return, not bride-price, but faithful service. According to Dos Santos,[1] writing in 1601, it was formerly the custom of the kings of Sofala to commit suicide by poisoning when any disaster fell upon them or they were disfigured by a physical defect, and, further, though it was incest outside the royal circle, kings married their own sisters or daughters. Even to-day there is evidence among some Shona of the rite of the door, of women rulers, and of celibate female rain-makers.

This is the nucleus around which the Lovedu have elaborated their royal institutions. Its primary elements did not come in the post-migratory period, for they are, except for the vaguest indications, absent among the Venda, who have always constituted the buffer between Lovedu and Karanga; and their presence among Nareni and Khaha to the south is not a feature of the Laudi or Eastern Sotho, but can be historically traced to the Lovedu. Among the Virwa an attenuated form of this complex may be attributed to Karanga influences. The accretions to and fallings away from the old nucleus were inevitable in the new setting of the Lovedu. The powers of the Karanga high god, who made rain and supported the sacred king, became projected upon the Lovedu queen; a mere vestige is left of the saturnalian licence accompanying the accession of a Karanga chief; and unsuccessful Lovedu claimants to the throne, who generally flee the country after the interregnum, are still referred to as *mambo* (sing. *lembo*). But there is among the Lovedu no sign of the resuscitation of the spirit of the deceased Karanga king in the maggots emerging from the decaying body as it lies sealed in a special hut before burial.

It is curious that among the Mamavolo, after 250 years of subjection to influences of the Sotho substratum and the Western and Central Sotho, this complex has been obliterated, while among the Lovedu it has been elaborated. The varying response is, however, intelligible in the light of their different histories. The Mamavolo, hiving off from the main body, were overwhelmed by the Sotho; even a cursory study shows how they lost their bearings and abandoned their faith in their heritage and, for security, remodelled their institutions upon those of their powerful neighbours. But the Lovedu maintained their dominance in their lowveld environment; they dealt with the challenges of invaders by elaborating the royal pattern so as to absorb them; and they responded to the prevailing belief that, not a priesthood, but the chief himself must

[1] Quoted in Theal, *Records of S.E. Africa*, vii. 191, 194.

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mediate for rain by a new conception both of the high god and of the divinity of the queen.

The forces refashioning the old nucleus are the result of composite internal reactions to external influences. In Chapter I ('Pageants of the Past') we saw how, in the face of a feeling of insecurity, Khiali tried to safeguard the succession by casting out the heir, and how the innovation set into motion forces that precipitated the change from kings to queens. Simultaneously came the elevation of the queens to veritable rain-gods. The Lovedu rain-making technique is Sotho and constrains the forces of nature by magic; it is a fundamental departure from the Karanga technique, which uses an appeal to the high god through his priests on the mountain, where he manifests himself in clamour and flame. But there is still a faint connexion, for foreigners allege that Mujaji herself originally obtained her power from Levibi, where Mwari appeared in thunder and lightning to a chief of the Ṭavatsinde, a group among the Venda. *Vuuga ya uuga bula e a na*, thundering [on the mountain of] Vuuga [is followed by] pattering rain, is still the praise-title of the Levibi of Vulovedu. The Lovedu, we surmise, have replaced Mwari by Kuzwane, creator-god, divested of his rain-making and celestial powers, and the word 'Mwari' (or 'Mwali') suggests, even to the Lovedu mind, Muhale, the Lovedu chief who is founder of the tribe, the only semi-hero of legend, and is associated with ritual, as, for instance, the Bird of Muhale in the *vyali* initiation, which is also associated with rain.

But if this is conjecture, it is significant that power to effect the great change from kings to queens was sought in father-daughter incest, a pattern enjoined by the Karanga and considered as the source of fertility among the Shona. Not only did the traditional model sanctify the change, but the success of the experiment was guaranteed by the elaboration of values already existing in the society. Indeed, the change is represented merely as a reassertion of an ancient but fictitious cycle of kings and queens. The accession of a woman, in spite of the high position of women, was obviously a difficulty; but the rationalization provided by a supposed cycle satisfied misgivings, and the change lent itself to transforming the danger of foreign encirclement into an instrument for extending the network of political institutions. The complicated exchanges of the queen's wives constitute only an extension of the old pattern of the house of Mambo, who received daughters from his subchiefs in return for protection or food or as a result of conquest, and who handed out his daughters to his personal bodyguard.

In the elaboration of the Lovedu royal complex, the model and justification came from their Karanga ancestors, but the vital addition of a new association of the chief with rain, which is neither Karanga nor Venda, was inspired by Sotho culture. But, in the Sotho substratum, rain, agricultural rites, and the drum cult were inextricably merged and, in the context of the Lovedu pattern, they did not all find an equally firm place. We shall touch lightly upon this complex, noting here merely the extraordinary fact that, despite the long-continued pressure of Venda influences, the Venda contribution to the Lovedu royal pattern is to-day hardly perceptible. The reason lies partly in its incongruity with the

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conception of a female ruler who is also a divine rain-maker, but partly also in the obscuring of the borrowed elements by readjustments since the accession of a queen.

For a time the Lovedu kings followed the custom of the solitary dance (*u pembela*) of the Venda. It was under the inspiration of such a dance just before his death that Mugodo (*c.* 1790) made his famous prophecy. Venda chiefs perform this dance either shortly after accession, when it firmly establishes against all claims their divine title to the throne, or towards the end of their reign, when it symbolizes abjuration of earthly things and elevation to godhead. These conceptions are inconsistent with the Lovedu pattern, which prescribes the rite of the door as the title to succession, and safeguards the queen's inscrutability by making her the inaccessible 'huckster in her hut'.

The special Venda disposition of forces and persons in the organization of the royal court has left numerous marks in Lovedu culture and its reception facilitated the transition from kings to queens. The *khadi* (father's sister or the sister), as priestess, is in a favourable position to assume control during the minority of the heir, as is the case to-day among the Sekhopo and in many districts in Vuloyedu. There is also the critical instance of the Mamaila, where between 1825 and 1895 sometimes men and sometimes women ascended the throne, and where the interaction of the two patterns may be closely observed. The Venda emphasis on the virginity, for a time, of the chief's wives has had widespread repercussions even as far as the Nareni; and among the Lovedu it has become interlocked with the cogs of the political machinery, so that, while the permanently chaste are rewarded, the unchaste go out as wives of great men to strengthen their loyalty to the royal house. Nowhere else has such an ingenious solution or reinterpretation been evolved, though the differing readjustments among the various tribes show amazing inventiveness and resourcefulness.

The patterns and culture elements of the royal complex among the surrounding tribes, which have found no place in the Lovedu complex, are too numerous to mention; but what is rejected is just as important as what is adopted in the evaluation and interpretation of the forces determining change. Least has been taken from the modern Shangana-Tonga, but there are similarities in detail, though not in pattern, which may be ascribed to a common heritage of the distant past. It is, for instance, only the Tonga in these parts who have to any extent elaborated the idea of placing chiefs' wives as rulers in the provinces, a practice known among the Lovedu kings long before the arrival of the Shangana-Tonga. Among the Shangana-Tonga the accession of a brother to the throne admits of the progressive realization of aspirations fostered by a culture in which at one and the same time the hierarchy of age and the coincidence of maturity with the peak of life as well as display and competition are more emphasized than among the Lovedu. This pattern is quite unacceptable among the Lovedu.

There are many other suggestive contrasts, but what must surprise the observer is the small contribution (apart from the rain-making technique) of the Sotho from the south and west. The distribution of medicated

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seeds by the chief, as among the highveld Sotho, is thought to savour of witchcraft, as only witches use medicine to make the crops grow. The Pedi pattern of the 'tribal candle', the chief wife whose first son succeeds and whose bride-price is contributed by the tribe (who thereby obtain a stake in the succession) has penetrated far. It has been partially accepted by the Laudi as well as the Sekhopo; but the Lovedu have not been influenced. Of absorbing interest and immense interpretative value has been the conflict of Lovedu and Pedi patterns where their incongruity precipitated a crisis among the Nareni and Khaha.

Everywhere in the lowveld the transition from kings to queens caused disturbances, and the form of justification invariably reflects values in the cultures concerned. Among the Mamaila the change is justified by the sin of the male heir. When the change first occurred, the male heir was ousted because he had cohabited with his father's wives, which is a disqualification by Venda standards. Thereafter males again ruled. When the change occurred a second time, the male heir was driven off because he had broken open the door, which is a sin by Lovedu standards.

Among the Khaha of Maake and the Nareni, both Mahlo and Letswalo, the position is different and may be considered less cursorily, though unfortunately only in very broad outline. The Khaha, greatly disturbed by invasions from the south, sought stability by trying to imitate Mujaji I, the security of whose tribe they attributed to her feminine powers and longevity. In those days (1827) the Mafefe, following the Pedi pattern of royal marriage, politically dominated the Khaha as well as many other tribes. Nevertheless, among the Khaha, Mali, a woman, succeeded as chief against her brothers and was 'placed' by Mujaji. She was the first Khaha female ruler, modelled her court upon the Lovedu pattern, and even adopted ritual suicide as a means to power. The whole Lovedu pattern was not incorporated, for the traditional basis was lacking, especially as regards the ascendancy of women, the unquestioned acceptance of the caprices of the door, and the conception of receiving tributary wives and redistributing them. Thus men were not excluded from the throne. Mali herself, having failed to prevent the flight into exile of her people, was succeeded by a male chief; but in 1928 a woman, Mali II (or Maake, as she is sometimes called), was called upon to rule. Mali II was married, was asked to renounce her husband, as queens could have no official husbands, and when she refused she had to abdicate and now reigns merely as regent during the minority of her brother. The task of integrating the Lovedu with the Khaha pattern was never completed: the door is invoked to decide only between rivals with plausible claims, and no adequate solution has been found to harmonize the Pedi and Lovedu patterns of royal marriage. The chief wife even of the queen among the Khaha is the mother's brother's daughter, and it is for her marriage that in theory each district head must contribute cattle 'to seek their mother' (*hu nyagela mma vona*).

Among the Mahlo Nareni, sporadically dominated by the Mafefe until as late as 1901, the change came under conditions of European control (1923). The door entrusted the rain charms and chieftainship to Manjana, wife of the deceased chief, Segorora. But when strife occurred, the

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European intervened, construed the opening of the door as coincidence, and recognized a son of Segɔrɔrɔ's first wife. (Incidentally, the Pedi conception of the 'tribal candle', though accepted for a time, by 1923 was again receding before the old Laudi insistence that the mother's brother's daughter required no additional support to be chief wife.) To-day the tribe is split: Manjana's magic has power to call up the clouds, but the quackery of the recognized chief sweeps up gales which scatter the rain.

Among the Letswalo the change, motivated by a desire for security, aggravated a crisis which continued into the European period and was ended by the drastic intervention of the European. Ramɔdau, son of chief Bodile, defied his father by refusing to espouse his one-eyed cross-cousin, whom Bodile himself then married. But this wife turned out to be a witch who expiated her offence of stealing the rain charms by being mauled to death by a lion. Angered by his son's disobedience and his wife's treachery, Bodile then (*c.* 1850) prophesied the coming of the ants and the accession of a woman; but in the total setting of the drama the son's disobedience is condoned by representing his cross-cousin as a deformed witch and the treachery that threatens the welfare of the tribe is made the occasion for the accession of Magaepia, daughter of Bodile. The whole theme is handled less skilfully than among the Lovedu and indicates the existence of many conflicting motives. Before Magaepia succeeded there were wholesale assassinations of successive heirs; Magaepia, having replaced the lost rain charms, became, first, rain-maker to Ramadau and, after his death at the hands of the Swazi invaders, queen, but only of a portion of the tribe. The strife continued, the European intervened, and, when the tribes of the lowveld rose against the encroaching settlers (1894), the Letswalo joined them, but suffered a devastating defeat.

Changes can be traced in all aspects of Lovedu culture, some greater, some smaller than those in their royal institutions. It will take us too far afield to deal with these changes, but a few remarks may be of interest. Almost nothing of the *gomana-vyali-vuhwera-vudiga* complex came with the royal group. Some of it can be attributed to the Sotho substratum: it is the *ɗou* of Ravothata who make the *gomana* drums and close the *vyali* with their weirdly costumed dancers, the *magɔɔbya*; the Kwena likewise claim always to have had the *gomana*; and Lovedu boys are allowed to become initiated at the *gomana* lodges of the *ɗou* of Khaɗa and of the Kwena of Maunadala, who also may accept royal boys to 'cross rapidly' (*hu ɗubunya*), or become initiated in a few days, at his *vuhwera*. The *magɔɔbya* are unique, but are found also among the *ɗou* of Masoma and it is from Tsubye (the country of present-day Shai) that these costumes came over a century ago, having been brought by two men named Maschiss and Dinawe. The evidence may be indefinitely multiplied, but it is more interesting to examine for a moment the different manifestations of the complex over the Northern Transvaal, because what has been emphasized in it or muted or rejected illuminates the character of the incorporating culture.

We have no evidence of the occurrence beyond the Northern Transvaal of the sacred drums, considered as shrines consecrated by human sacrifice

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and as the focus of a 'school' for revealing the secrets of the whistling ancestors (*zwidjajani*). Some Venda north of the Limpopo have drums of the *mondzo* (spirits of the chiefs) and *zwidjajani* (familiars of Mnisi, the rain-god), and there is some evidence of drum ritual among Pedi, Venda, and even Tonga; but the elaborated drum cult belongs to the Northern Sotho. It has three characteristic elements: the supreme moments of the agricultural year are signalized by the sounding of the drums and the cult is intimately linked with rain or fertility; these calendric observances, as well as other great national occasions, are, by the interposition of the drums, brought under the surveillance of the tribal gods, represented by men masquerading as spirits who have come to earth; and in a special initiation novices are inducted into the secrets of the cult.

This constellation is most emphasized in three tribal groups: Laudi (especially Phalaborwa), Maɖala, and Xananwa-Ɗokwa-Moletshe. Among the Phalaborwa the striking emphasis is upon the link with rain-making, upon the *lesugu* or women's counterpart, and upon the exulting display before the drums which is permitted to those who have military and hunting exploits to their credit. These features become progressively attenuated westwards towards Ulovedu. The stress upon display reappears among the Maɖala, though in a different form, for there we find the esoteric *khidinkhi*, which is at once a dramatic dance inspired by the sacred drums glorifying the prowess of the chief and of warriors, and a rain and fertility rite, blessing cattle and crops and safeguarding the people against disease. In drawing into the complex the welfare of the cattle and in the absence of the *lesugu*, the Maɖala pattern differs from that of the Laudi, but approximates that of the Xananwa-Ɗokwa-Moletshe. These differences coincide with the emphases of the different cultures. The Laudi have an attenuated cattle-cult, though it is better developed than among the Lovedu; whereas the highveld Sotho, influenced from the west and south-west, have a fuller cattle-cult, though by no means as elaborate as that of the west (Tswana) with its seasonal migratory life, conditioned partly by pastoralism and partly by a desire for security in a difficult environment. Among the Laudi men's and women's initiations are often combined, but on the highveld they are markedly separated, for the *nyali* and *vuhwera* exist as distinct institutions and the Bird, guiding spirit of the *nyali*, is usually absent. In the third area, that of the Xananwa-Ɗokwa-Moletshe, the dispositions are in many respects quite distinctive. The drums become the focus of an elaborate fertility cult, rain-making stands outside the complex, and the chief *motif* is not display, but dramatization of obedience to the gods and loyalty to the chief. The supreme moment is when the manhood of the tribe, collected in the cattle kraal, receive the command of the gods communicated, under inspiration of the drums, by the *zwidjajani*.

There is every possible variation in the patterns among the intervening tribes. In some, such as Tswale, Moila, Dikxale, Mamavolo, and Uirwa of Makhatho, the cult is often structurally unintegrated, standing outside the province of the chief and consisting merely of 'schools' managed by outsiders who have their own drums. The cult in these cases is practised merely for revenue purposes; it is a 'business' as the

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Natives say; the alien drums are pierced and rendered useless at the death, not of the chief, but of their owners; and the *zwidajani* are often visitors from tribes where the cult is better developed. Among the Lovedu the cult has been only partially accepted; the pattern is the pattern of the focal area in the east. The features that have been attenuated or elaborated can be explained in the light of the emphasis of Lovedu culture: there is no display, no stress upon fertility, no linking with the welfare of the cattle, no elaboration in connexion with agricultural ritual, but the *zwidajani* command peace and agreement among men.

Elsewhere in this book we have given slight indications that the Lovedu interlocking *mayasalo* exchanges and social structure can be traced to Karanga models; that the Lovedu have rejected the pattern of the wedding feast and wedding gifts which comes from the west; that Lovedu legal arrangements are the resultant of composite forces; that the smeller-out and the cult of spirit possession come from the Shangana-Tonga and Thovela. These and many other borrowed culture elements may be followed up with advantage, and indicate the magnitude of culture change. But for our purposes, before proceeding to discuss the nature and effect of the impact of Western culture, a brief reference to Shangana-Tonga influences will suffice. Despite similarities in detail—an attenuated boys' puberty rite, the conception of *makhuma* (ritual defilement), the indirect warning to the witch by *ku thela*, to mention a few features—and despite the extensive reception by the Lovedu of Shangana-Tonga elements of material culture—fowls, various crops, and methods of storing and threshing and stamping—the striking feature remains the great gulf between the two cultural configurations. They have, for instance, different views as regards sex morality, different marriage patterns, different conceptions of the hierarchy of age and the position of women; they deal differently with the situation of death, with rain-making, display, and regimentation, and, whereas the social groupings are totemic among the Lovedu, they are non-totemic among the Shangana-Tonga.

There are many other divergences, but one difference that calls for comment is the attitude to and reception of European culture. More adaptable, if brazen, than the Lovedu, at least in their new environment, the Shangana-Tonga have, as fugitives under Sotho domination, more complacently submitted themselves to European conquest. Disciplined by the military heritage of the Zulu, they made efficient police and soldiers, especially against their Sotho overlords. Their training in competition, trade, and display enabled them to respond better than the Lovedu to the stimuli of Western culture. Above all, European penetration benefited them, while it dispossessed the Sotho. The history of the contacts and reactions is the history of a century, which is far too complicated for treatment here. But this can be said: the Shangana-Tonga gained land and the right to be ruled by their own chiefs; the Lovedu lost land which was given to their erstwhile subjects; the prestige of Mujaji in the eyes of the white man waned while that of Shangana-Tonga chiefs waxed; and the Shangana-Tonga subservience

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of the white man, some of their headmen were granted independent locations which have served as nuclei for the building up of more united tribal groups. (See accompanying map.)

The most important Sotho tribes of this area are the Lobedu, the Narene and the Khaha who together comprise about three-quarters of the total Sotho population.[1] The outstanding demographical feature is, however, the numerical predominance of the Lobedu who, with a population of well over 40,000, are not only the greatest tribe, but outnumber all the other Sotho-speaking tribes put together.[2] The pre-eminence and cultural influence of the Lobedu in this area does not rest solely upon their numerical preponderance. It is based largely upon the fame of their queen, Modjadji, who, as the greatest rain-maker in the Northern Transvaal, is not only regularly approached with gifts by other chiefs but also sometimes places them on the throne (*ho ba bohosi*) and is appealed to in cases of disputed succession.

This area, though forming part of a greater cultural whole including the Northern Transvaal Highveld and probably Pediland to the south, is, however, sharply characterized by distinctive features, such as ritual suicide of the chief and recognition of women as rulers in their own right, that are not found elsewhere. These are sufficient to form a fairly well-defined culture pattern, which, owing to the overwhelming numerical preponderance of the Lobedu, if for no other reason,

[1] The Sotho population of our area is made up as follows, according to van Warmelo:

Lobedu	8257 taxpayers.		
Narene	2521	"	(Mahlo 1332, Letswalo 1189).
Khaha	1608	"	
Thabina (Mamoboya)	1088	"	
Phalaborwa	332	"	
Makzoba	300	"	
Baba Mamidja	413	"	
Shai or Tsubye	236	"	
Tswale	337	"	Sotho-speaking Venda.
Molla	260	"	

The only large tribal groups among Shangana-Tonga are

Mohlaba	2918 taxpayers.	
Nwamitwa	1347	"

[2] The population is Lobedu 8257 taxpayers.

1888	7535	"

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241 of the agriculture of the more mountainous portions of the Lowveld is the use of terraces, or rather contour walls of stone, for there is no levelling of the ground in between, to prevent excessive washing away of soil. With the absence of men in the towns and the introduction of the plough with subsequent preference for valley cultivation, these contour walls are tending to fall into disuse.

462 Division of labour between the sexes is the same here as among
[71] Venda and the Highveld tribes of the Northern Transvaal. While care of cattle is the province of men and agricultural work is done by both sexes, cooking and housekeeping is confined to women. Men are responsible for the erection of storage receptacles, renewal of pantry and village enclosures and the lion's share in hut-building, including thatching, for women do only plastering of walls and preparation of the floor. The crafts confined to men are ironwork, work in skin, and all wood-work such as the manufacture of drums, platters, spoons, milk pails, stamping blocks, porridge twirlers, and flat winnowing baskets. Pottery is confined to women, but weaving and basketry (other than the making of winnowing baskets) is done by both sexes.

642 Political Organization and Position of the Chief. The most
●643 outstanding features of the Lobedu culture complex, which clearly differentiate the Lowveld tribes from their neighbours to the south and west, are ritual suicide of the chief and the possibility of women ruling in their own right.[1] Among the Lobedu the chief reigns for a period of four circumcision schools, each 'school' being separated from the previous one by a period of almost ten years, and then has to drink poison and die. The institution can hardly continue when its supporting background of ritual and belief is crumbling, but it has survived to this day; the immediate predecessors of the present Lobedu and Letswalo rulers died unnatural deaths in the traditional manner, Modjadji II in 1894 and Mamathola in 1905. There is in this area no conscious belief that growth of the crops, welfare of the cattle,

[184] [1] These two features occur together in the most important tribes of the Lowveld such as the Lobedu, Khaša, Narene, Thabina. The only tribes to whom this institution is foreign are the Phalaborwa and Tsubye and the two Venda tribes of Mošla and Tswale. Sekhopo and Radwadu, sections of the Balobedu, broke away when the first woman succeeded and themselves have only men rulers.

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and the regularity of the seasons are bound up with the life of the chief, but the identification of the earth with the chief in the phrase ' mabu a fesa ' (the earth is hot, burning) which is used by all Lowveld tribes as a euphemism to denote the illness or death of the chief, seems to imply some connexion between the life of the chief and the fertility of the earth. Some such association seems implicit also in the feeling among the Lobedu that the chief should have no physical defect (it is thought to be impossible for the queen to be ill, and the present queen has never had a day's illness) and should lead a secluded life, being seen by and giving audience to royal relatives and the nobility only. So close is the association between the ruler and the land he rules among the Lobedu that the chief may not leave the country or cross its boundaries, a taboo which made it impossible for Modjadji to register her vote at the nearest Native Commissioner's office in the recent elections for the Native Council.

The great power of the chief in the three most important tribes of the Lowveld lies in rain-making. Here we find as in so many other aspects of their culture an intensification of a feature present in modified form in many other tribes, leading to a difference as great or greater than the complete absence of the trait. Many chiefs in South Africa are great rain-makers, and tribes of the Highveld and Sekukuniland share with those of the Lowveld the custom in time of drought of sending young men to ' beat mofoko ' pegs around the country or to put out all the fires in the country and rekindle new ones in each village. But the Lowveld chiefs, especially Modjadji, are the greatest rain-makers of all, recognized in the old days as such by tribes as far south as the Swazi and Zulu, and rain ritual here has characteristic features not found elsewhere. Important among these is the custom of dancing for rain. When the rains do not come at the right time, it is usual for each headman in turn to come to the royal kraal with his followers to *loba* rain by dancing for the chief, and when this does not help the women come as a last resort to do a special dance which is so exacting and causes so much crying on the part of small babies, who have to go hungry while their mothers dance, that it is believed the chief must be moved by it. This custom, still practised by the Lobedu, has died out elsewhere in the Lowveld, having been last performed among the Khaha in 1911. The belief that twins, mis-

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643 789 766 carriages, abortions, and people dying of any severe coughing illness prevent rain from falling unless specially buried in wet soil is found with variations all over the Lowveld, among Sotho and Shangana-Tonga alike.

643 588 644 [557] Women rulers have their 'wives' just as though they were men, and a peculiar feature of Lobedu culture is the large number of wives or *bathanoni* of the queen. Every Lobedu induna sends a daughter to be a *mothanoni* of the queen, as do also any of the nobility who wish to be on a good footing with her; and these, together with girls sent by foreign tribes as gifts for rain, form a large harem. *Bathanoni* of the chief occupy an honoured position at the Head Kraal, have, on the whole, less work than ordinary women and are a source of honour to their family who through them become privileged to call the queen their *tsetse*—bridegroom or son-in-law. They may be given in marriage to relatives of the queen or to commoners, in which case the peculiar situation arises of their children preferring [551] to call themselves sons and daughters of the queen, using the surname Modjadji, to taking the lineage name of their father. Often, however, the *bathanoni* remain with the queen, the ideal being to remain virgin for some years, after which they are given their own hut in the [565] village and permission to have children. A *mothanoni* of noble birth ranks higher than a commoner and can even bear the heir to the [184] throne when the queen herself is barren. Other Lowveld chiefs do not receive daughters from their headmen, though the Khaha and Letswalo used to accept girls from foreign chiefs for rain as did the Lobedu. These women became a link and source of friendship between the two tribes and, especially among Lobedu, played a real part in the gradual growth and influence of the tribe. Even the great Ngungunyane once sent women to Modjadji for rain, and there are, to-day still, at her head kraal sisters and daughters of important chiefs in the Northern Transvaal, though money and cattle have now been substituted for women in rain transactions.

643 [171] The legal heir to the throne is, in the Lowveld, the eldest son of the chief wife, who should always be the daughter of the chief's mother's brother. The cattle for this marriage are not, as among the Pedi and one or two Highveld tribes, contributed by all the headmen, nor are the fires in the country extinguished on the occasion of the marriage,

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marriage. Where the chief is a woman, her own son or daughter succeeds. The Lobedu now have a distinct preference for women rulers; the last three chiefs have been women, and the present queen succeeded in preference to her elder uterine brother. It would seem that the fashion was set by the Lobedu, for tribal genealogies show no women chiefs in the Lowveld prior to the accession of Modjadji I. Shortly after that we have the appearance of the first queen in the Khaha and Mamaila tribes, followed later by Letswalo and Mahlo. Lowveld tribes are no exception to the general tendency among Bantu for succession to the throne to be accompanied by trouble and bloodshed. They have, however, an interesting method of submitting the case of various claimants to the decision of the powers that be by the ordeal of trying the door. All claimants to the throne are brought to the closed door of the hut in which the old chief died. One by one, they step forward shouting their own name and ancestry to try the door which, while resisting all efforts of other claimants, flies open at the touch of the rightful heir.[1]

The Lowveld chief is assisted and advised in the government of his country by his relatives,[2] generally known as *bakhomana*. There are no formal councils, as among Tswana, and it is even doubtful whether the *pitjo* or meeting of all adult men in the tribe ever had power to make decisions. Certainly to-day it is called only when orders or notices from European authorities have to be transmitted. No one in the Lobedu tribe ever knows what is happening even in important matters affecting them all, and the tribe accepts with equanimity the most outrageous favouritism of the royal family.

The district, bounded by natural features such as streams or depressions down the hill-sides, is generally quite small, varying in extent from about one square mile to five, so that in a country like Modjadji's with an area of some 140 square miles there are about 100 headmen. Aggregations of districts into larger units under subchiefs, such as are found in Zululand, though not unknown, are not

[1] Some one is, of course, inside to hold the door against the wrong claimants and in Modjadji's tribe the chief always has one hut with two doors, said to be for this purpose.

[2] The *rangwane* (father's brother) or *rakhadi* (father's sister) are often important advisers or, especially where a woman is ruling, the *malume* (mother's brother).

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753 769 mother—are important in ancestor worship. Any of these forebears may seize a man and make him ill, require a dedicated animal or a shrine in his or her honour, and, in fact, one may find shrines in one village or kraal to kin of several different lineages. In practice the mother's mother is an ancestor who most often causes illness in her grandchildren because of her great love for them.

621 The core of a large kraal or village (20 to 80 huts) is usually the minor lineage, but there are always also affines and cognates, quite apart from the spouses of agnatic members of the lineage who themselves are usually cognates. In kraal matters it is by virtue of being not an agnate, but a member of the kindred (*mulɔgɔ*), that a man has a voice. The core of the district is 602 sometimes also the lineage of the district head, but the lineage is not a 634 political group and the influence and authority of its head are not a function of his relationship, agnatic or other, to the people living in the district. ●643 Districts, of which there are 140—with an average area of 1 square mile and population of 250—are linked to the queen on the pattern of cattle and wife exchanges. Districts are either held by descendants of one of the original agnatic lineages of the nuclear ruling group, or they have been allocated to *vaṭanoni* (wives of the queen) or to immigrant alien groups. They all send wives to the queen, who thereby becomes their son-in-law (*muḍuhulu*) and, by allocating them to other district heads and to royal relatives, she becomes parent-in-law (*vamakhulu*) to the latter. Those lineages of the royal nuclear group who send wives to the queen are both 'brothers' (agnates) and relatives-in-law (affines) to her. The use of the mechanism of the social system to align groups into reciprocal relations forges a great network of ties radiating from the queen to all strategic points in the society. It was in this way that large numbers of alien refugees were incorporated into the tribe and became related to one another. Payments of tribute and services to the queen are thus looked upon as the fulfilment of kinship obligations, in return for which the queen not only gives land and protection from enemies, but also transforms the clouds into rain and so frees men from fear and uncertainty.

602 Thus the kinship ties that bind subjects to the rain queen are interlocked with the values and institutions supporting her divinity. The homage in 641 wives that is paid to her for giving men the blessings of rain, is also the 643 means of forging the network of kinship ties. The kinship ties, again, convert political tribute and services due to the queen into morally sanctioned ceremonial exchanges between relatives-in-law; and just as there is no need for military virtues and military organization to deter enemies, since the queen, merely by withholding rain, can secure the defeat of the foe, so also there is no need to rely upon force to secure the willing allegiance of subjects who are treated to the beer that they bring, ostensibly as tribute to a sovereign but in reality as gifts from parents-in-law.

643 The queen is accordingly the pivot of the nodal institutions of the society. 772 The benevolent forces in the universe are, as the Lovedu sometimes

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say, equally divided between the ancestors and the rain queen. And it is she also who controls, in the interest of social well-being, that half of the cosmic order upon which men's life and happiness are conceived most vitally to depend. This dependence upon her and the moral imperatives of the kinship obligations between her and her subjects are the main factors conditioning the Lovedu outlook upon the world and upon society. Their ritual ideology, linking the queen's mystical powers to the welfare of society, expresses their most important conceptions of the ordering of the natural world; their kinship ideology, incorporated into the political system and converting political into moral obligations, provides the main principles governing men's relations to one another. Agreement and mutual adjustment between individuals become ultimate values which have an overriding validity in determining the rights and duties of man to man. The Lovedu political pattern follows that of the centralized states of the South Bantu; yet it is not force but reciprocity, not administrative machinery but ties of sentiment, not inflexible rules but agreement, that are the great principles of social and political obligation.

Myths and Origins

The Lovedu are not given to speculation about first beginnings or final causes. There is no world-dawn or far-off mythical event when the order of nature and of society was irrevocably instituted. There is not even a sky-god to account for lightning and thunder or to furnish men with an explanation of stellar phenomena, such as the movement of heavenly bodies. Some of the larger stars are named, for example the Pleiades which are associated with hoeing time, but the association seems to be a vestige diffused from another culture and has no real significance, whether pragmatic or mystical. A vague, hardly ever invoked myth attributes the creation of the world and man to *Khuzwane* who left his footprints on certain rocks in the north when they were still new and soft. But the act of creation, like *Khuzwane* himself, is too remote, too unrelated to present realities, to be of any concern to men; and they find no place in, nor do they in any way influence, the Lovedu philosophy of the cosmos or of society. The Lovedu apparently feel the need to posit a first or final cause, but such a cause has not continued to operate as a force. An inexplicable affliction such as sterility appears sometimes to be attributed to *Mudimo*, the creator-god of the Sotho, who, according to Lovedu thought, is identical with *Khuzwane*; but *Mudimo* in this context is to be equated with a conditional destiny, and thus does not imply belief in fatalism since the course of events can be deflected by man-made medicines. Nor is there any supplication of the creator, for the Lovedu do not conceive of any link between their ancestor spirits and the creator: *Khuzwane* cannot be approached through the ancestors.

Thus origins of the cosmic order and wonders of celestial phenomena do not exercise the Lovedu mind. When Simeon, a close relative of the queen, whom we had interested in these things, asked the old men about them,

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But the whole cycle of myths merely emphasizes in very general terms the importance of rain-making as a prerequisite of the claim to chieftainship and for the well-being of the tribe; it does not concern itself with justifying the validity of the various institutional arrangements that are the main support of the beliefs and values of the queen's mystical credentials.

Conception of the Natural Order

The Lovedu do not oppose man and nature. There are no explicit formulations of the nature of the universe, but a natural order inexorably going its ordained way is implicitly rejected in their conceptions. The assumption is that cosmic forces are controllable and, in fact, controlled at every turn by man for his own benefit. Since nature is of interest and importance only so far as it is or can be used by society, there is no such conception as a world order unrelated to man's activities and desires. The order of nature is a controlled one. There are various ways in which man is able to use and control powers in nature—by *vuŋaga* (the evil aspect of which is *vulɔi*), i.e. by the use of power concentrated in certain persons and objects; by appeal to the ancestor-gods upon whom are projected the powers that the child experiences in relation to its parents; through the mysteries of the *digɔma* which are associated with initiation and the fertility cult; and through the divinity of the queen whose concern it is to control nature in the interests of the tribe as a whole. This idea of the control of nature by the chief on behalf of the tribe is not unique; it is common among the Bantu tribes of South Africa. But the Lovedu emphasis is on the divine origin and special affinity with nature of the queen herself, whereas in tribes such as the Zulu and Tsonga, where the mystical relation of the chief to his people and his powers over nature have to be achieved by magical strengthening on his accession and to be renewed periodically, it is largely by means of the magic of the royal regalia that the chief is able to exercise control. Among all, including Lovedu, one of the most important factors in the powers and position of the chief is the fact that he is the living representative of the long line of royal ancestors (tribal gods). There is considerable overlapping of these four categories among the Lovedu. Thus ancestors are kept satisfied and happy by a charm placed in their shrine; the queen controls rain not only through her divinity but also by means of medicines and charms and appeals to her ancestors who can prevent her from making rain. Let us consider these means for the control of nature in greater detail.

Vuŋaga (skilled use of power concentrated in persons and objects)

The forces of nature may be manipulated through properties intrinsic in various objects, animate and inanimate. The substances in which these attributes or powers (*maaŋa*) reside are mainly *melimo* (medicines) or *mere* (plants). But the term medicines in this context has a wider connotation than the parallel term among us; it includes both medicine and magic, and is a medico-magical conceptual category which to the Lovedu is quite distinct

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and the use of *dithugula*, objects such as beads which have once been in their possession; but they can also be constrained by medicine or the properties of matter.

Ancestors are capricious: their complaints as seen in the divining bones are usually about being neglected; but they may cause illness to those they love most in order to receive recognition, have their name perpetuated, or their beads worn. They are said to 'hold' the woman experiencing difficult labour, to afflict children with sore eyes, and even to prevent the queen from making rain. Their complaints need imply no omission or neglect on the part of the afflicted descendant, but merely some special desire that could not have been anticipated. The degree of either neglect or tendance bears no relation to their satisfaction or dissatisfaction, since the ascription of misfortune to the ancestors is always *ex post facto*: hence the paradox that a family that is assiduous in its tendance of the ancestors may suffer more ill health and misfortune than one that has neglected the ancestors for a long time.

Dithugula are instrumental in controlling nature not only indirectly through the ancestors but also directly by virtue of the substances used in them. A *thugula* may be a shrine to an ancestor (male or female), an animal dedicated to him, old beads or objects of iron to which, owing to their having once been in his possession, power to influence him is attributed. But a *thugula* may also be any charm of herbs concocted by a doctor and worn for protective purposes. The queen's rain-medicines are *dithugula*. The most important religious ceremony of the year, the annual offering of beer to ancestors as thanksgiving for the harvest, is also called *thugula*. *Dithugula* thus constitute a category of objects, usually closely associated with the ancestors (though they may be made by a doctor), through which they may be approached, and which have special virtue particularly to give health and protection against ills and epidemics.

Dithugula are found in every lineage which, through its shrines, dedicated animals, and charms, secures the general welfare of its members. The queen's *dithugula*, her rain-medicines, sacred objects, and shrines through which she intercedes with the royal ancestors, are the ultimate symbols of her power and the safeguards of the welfare of the country; and just as certain medicines (*diphaba*), which are used in shrines or offerings to make the ancestors forget their complaints, are pegged round the village by the paternal aunt or sister of its head to protect it against witches, so also the queen may *thugula* the whole country by sending boys to peg medicated sticks on its boundaries as a protection against evil, particularly epidemics that might threaten it from outside.

The queen's control

The basis of the queen's control over nature is her divinity. So bound up is she with nature that her very emotions affect the rain. The complex of royal institutions includes the conceptions that she must be without

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643 physical imperfections, not susceptible to the ills that befall ordinary men; that she cannot die a natural death but departs only by her own volition; that succession to the throne is uncertain since the choice of a ruler must in the last resort be made by the spirits of the tribe; that though she may not have a husband, lest political control become concentrated in him, yet she must bear the heir by a secret consort (a royal classificatory brother) specially chosen to maintain untarnished the purity of the royal blood; that she ensures the regularity of nature and the changing of the seasons; and, more particularly, that her death dislocates the rhythm of nature, bringing drought and famine, the abrogation of law and order. People today still speak with horror and fear of the years (1894–6) following the death of the previous queen, Majuji II. They were years, as we know from documentary sources, when drought, locusts, rinderpest and, in their wake, unprecedented famine and desolation, wiped out practically all the cattle and perhaps a third of the human population.

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643 The preservation of the queen's sanctity requires that her life be subject to observances which shield her from the public eye and restrain her movements. She is 'the huckster in the hut' (*mushava-ndoni*) who sells her rain-medicines from the seclusion of her abode, and may not move about freely or leave the district of the capital. She was the only chief in the Union who, a few years ago, could not go to the Native Commissioners' Office to exercise the vote of her people in the election of a representative to the Native Representative Council. She cannot attend large assemblies of men, and is generally inaccessible except to her close relatives and great councillors. But otherwise her activities are not restricted, nor is her life a continuous ritual and, unlike other Divine Kings, there are no elaborate safeguards surrounding her every movement.

762 Tradition decrees that chiefs may have no physical defect, but not that they must die while still young and strong. Ritual suicide of the queen is by Lovedu conceptions not a means of guaranteeing a timely death lest failure of physical powers should upset the regularity of nature, but rather a symbol of her divinity, for it proves that she is not heir to the weaknesses of ordinary man. It is mystically connected with the fourth circumcision school in her reign: she must see the boys going in but not coming back. The Lovedu queen is believed to be immune from disease, but age does not diminish—it even increases—her mystical powers over nature. The only disqualification to rule is inability to make rain in the early period of her reign. Once she has demonstrated, by her ability to make rain, that the rain-charms have been entrusted to her and that she has been divinely chosen, irregularities in the seasons are attributed not to weakness of her powers but to some extraneous factor, such as contraventions of rules associated with keeping the country cool, disobedience to the chief, and the anger of the ancestor spirits.

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643 766 769 Arrangements connected with succession of a new queen also emphasize her mystical relations with the cosmic order. The death of her predecessor

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was not announced for a year, while, as the body decomposed, such vital ingredients of the rain-medicine as the skin and body-dirt were carefully collected; after the announcement a period of anarchy often supervened as rival claimants marshalled their armed forces for the struggle for the throne. At the end of this year of mourning all the fires of the country were put out with purificatory rain-medicine (*mufugɔ*) from the official keeper at the capital.

This fire rite symbolizes purification of the country as well as a transition from one order to another. At any time when the country is not right (*naha a e loge*), as when there is severe drought, the fires are put out 'to usher in a new year' (i.e. a new order or period of operative forces). But the fire rite also symbolizes the means through which the allegiance of subjects and the authority of the queen are asserted. Finally, the beating out of the fires with cooling medicine is part of a complex of practices connected with heat and cold, symbolizing respectively dysphoria and euphoria. The 'earth is hot' (*mavu a fesa*) on the death of the queen and a new cosmic order has to be inaugurated by cooling it in preparation for the new rain-maker.

After the fire rite there follows the divine identification of the successor by the rite of opening the door. The rival claimants, one of whom, chosen by the inner royal council and the deceased queen, has been secretly prepared for his office, pass the hut in which the queen has died. They announce their identity to the spirit of the deceased, lightly touching the door of the hut, which yields to the chosen successor.

In and around the inner secret council where the choice is actually made centre serious tensions, not only between the present ruler and the heir-elect for whose sake and succession she must poison herself, apparently not always willingly, but also between those who depend for their position and prestige upon the patronage of one or the other. The 'chosen' heir always goes to live far away, ostensibly to conceal his or her identity but in reality also owing to a serious conflict with the reigning sovereign.[1]

For the regulation of cosmic forces the queen relies not only on her divinity but also upon the royal rain-medicines and, in the last resort, on the agreement of the royal ancestor spirits. To prevent the weakening of the rain-medicine it must be revitalized by being given the first termites and first-fruits each year, and occasionally parts of a black sheep or, in the old days, a human being.

Rain-charms are liable to weaken (*figɛhɛla*) or become defiled (*khuma*) by certain deviations from the normal course of nature unless special precautions are taken. Twins, babies cutting their upper teeth before their lower, women dying in pregnancy, abortions and miscarriages, men dying from *ḓere*, a deadly coughing disease believed to be contracted by having sex intercourse with a woman who has had a miscarriage or abortion or whose child has died before weaning—all these are deviations which contaminate the earth, causing it to be 'hot', and therefore have to be buried in wet soil or

[1] Males are not debarred from succession; indeed the early rulers were all men. But a definite preference for women rulers seems now to be firmly established.

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cooled with rain-medicine. The polluted corpse (called *pukudi*, the opposite of *fuga*) is thought of as thrusting up an arm and waving it about to disperse the rain.

It is the duty of the queen each year to *thea* or 'establish' the season propitiously for her people. Certain district heads who are close relatives of the queen have rainpots which they revitalize every year with medicine from the queen and stir them up at the queen's command to ensure a propitious season. In the old days the year was 'established' also by the beating of the sacred drums (*gɔmana*) and a visit to the royal ancestor graves, but this has fallen into disuse.

If there is drought or if the rain does not come at its appropriate time, people say the queen has not changed the year properly and steps are taken to approach her. Royal relatives may approach her personally or complain in her hearing that she is killing her people by withholding rain; district heads may formally pay homage (*hu lova*) with gifts of £1 or a head of cattle, or may bring a troupe of dancers to please her and invoke her pity at the spectacle of people dancing when they should be hoeing. The songs (*lesugu*) are associated with offerings to the ancestors and with rain. If these efforts are of no avail diviners are consulted to determine the cause of drought—the rain-charms may have been 'weakened' or evil practices of witches may have prevented rain. In 1937 the people were told at a tribal gathering to report lightning 'sent' by witches, and shortly afterwards, when lightning had struck a tree near a village, boys were sent to sprinkle every house in the area with *mufugo* to 'cool' the lightning. Witches may also disperse rain by hanging up medicated branches which sway in the air. If it is an ancestor that is 'holding the queen's hands' he or she has to be propitiated by the sacrifice of a black beast or sheep on the grave.

When winds frustrate the efforts of the queen to make rain, especially when a gale disperses auspicious black clouds, people come to condole with her as if she had lost a relative, and it is taboo to work in the fields the next day, just as it is on the day after the first rain of the season and on certain other occasions.

The queen is 'Transformer of the Clouds', the changer of the seasons, and guarantor of their cyclic regularity, but she can exercise her powers auspiciously only in certain conditions and in 'agreement with the ancestors'.

Digɔma

The fourth category of forces by which nature is regulated in the interests of man consists of *digɔma* which are associated more especially with changes in the status of man. A *gɔma* is primarily a drum, but as an abstract concept it is particularly identified with the power concentrated in the drum cult. This cult includes the large complex of institutions connected with rites of transition, of which the year-long *vyali-vuhwera* (fertility cult) is one. A *gɔma* is thought of as something mystical and secret, awesome and esoteric. The circumcision 'school' for boys is called a *gɔma* which is said to 'bite'

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the initiates. It is something mystically powerful which transforms boys into men. But if the initiation as a whole is a *gɔma*, so also are the secret formulae, objects, and mummeries that form part of the ceremony.

With the *vyali-vuhwera* fertility cult, which is at the same time also an initiation for girls (*vyali*) and for boys (*vuhwera*), are associated many *digɔma*, in the form of masked figures in costumes made of grass, reeds, and leaves, or plays and mummeries emphasizing the value of certain foods. But the greatest of all is *Khiudogane*, Bird of Muhale (the royal founder ancestor), ruling spirit of the *vyali*, which is believed to emerge from a pool on moonlight nights, leave mists behind it when it departs, and upon which much of the ritual centres. It is the link between two aspects of sacred forces, that conceived as mysterious, fearful, approached only through elaborate symbolism, and that represented by ancestors and directly approached. For the bird is both a great *gɔma* and a symbol of the royal ancestors.

Revived in 1938, after an interval of twenty years, the *vyali-vuhwera* with its great *digɔma* is thought to promote abundance and rain, the welfare and happiness of the people. While it lasts it is the main national interest to which all energies are bent and all activities subordinated. Marriages are held up, the normal judicial machinery is at a standstill, and anything that might compete with the ceremonial is interdicted. Since initiates spend only early mornings and evenings at the secret enclosure, they sleep at home and are able to carry on essential domestic tasks for the greater part of the day.

The sacred drums of the tribe (*digɔma*), four in number, are kept and cared for by the people of Ravothata, a lineage that came from Phalaborwa, where the drum cult is more intimately connected with the chief than among the Lovedu. These drums, which are said to contain under the resonator a human skull and, in the case of the smallest, the facial skin of a councillor, are mystically linked with the life of the queen and the welfare of the tribe. The heir sits on the smallest drum while being taught the rain ritual and it must accompany the queen if ever she is forced to flee from her enemies. The sacred drums are spoken of as *vadimo* (gods) as well as *digɔma*, and they were beaten twice a year in the old days in a ceremony known as *gɔmana* as an appeal to the ancestors for rain and to thank them for the harvest. The latter took the form of an initiation into the secrets of the cult at which boys were given certain cuts on their faces.

Associated with the sacred drums and also classed as *digɔma* are the *zwidajani*, the weird whistling ancestor spirits of the royal lineage who come to earth in the guise, it is said, of half-men with one eye, one arm, and one leg, to take part in the rites connected with the sacred drums and in the annual harvest *thugula* ceremony in all royal and certain other lineages. They are, in fact, as is known to those initiated in the *gɔmana*, old men masquerading as spirits. They appear in the bush near the village and join in the singing of *lesugu* songs which are sung, on these occasions, through specially constructed secret whistles.

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PROPERTY, CROSS-COUSIN MARRIAGE, AND THE FAMILY CYCLE AMONG THE LOBEDU[1]

Eileen Jensen Krige

THE Lobedu are a South Bantu people characterized by the institution of 'divine kingship'. They live in a mountainous area of the North-eastern Transvaal lowveld. Originally from *Bokhalaga* (S. Rhodesia), they migrated south when the empire of Monomotapa broke up and established themselves as rulers over the sparse Sotho population they found in occupation. The rain-making powers of their queen, enhanced by the mystery and secrecy of her ritual seclusion, attracted many accretions from diverse tribal groups from surrounding areas who sought security and peace particularly during the period of unrest following the wars of Shaka, the Zulu, and the raids of Matabele and Swazi. For enemies feared to attack the Lobedu queen lest they be visited by drought and locusts. The descendants of the Lobedu proper therefore form only a small portion of the total population which, however, except for relatively recent Tsonga immigrants from Portuguese East Africa, is remarkably homogeneous in culture. The Lobedu had no military traditions and built up their kingdom by peaceful means.

The form of government is that of a central authority with the queen as the head of state and spatially defined political

[1]The field-work on which this essay is based was carried out jointly with my husband, the late J. D. Krige, under the auspices of the International African Institute in 1936–8, and was supplemented and brought up to date by short field trips in 1961 and 1962.

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642 631 634 644 562 643 559 588 units which, each under a headman, enjoy a considerable degree of autonomy.[1] A large proportion of these districts into which the country is divided are ruled by the descendants of original sections of the nuclear group; a few have been allocated to alien groups under their own headmen while some are held by royal women, *batanoni* or 'wives' of the queen. Many districts now held by commoners originated from *batanoni* but since women do not succeed one another as heads of districts these have been inherited by their sons of husbands given to them by the queen. Royal wives (*batanoni*) are of various kinds. Some are of royal blood, daughters of close relatives of the queen to whom they have been given as a token of homage (*ho loba*). Only these are set up by the queen as rulers over districts. (Women may also rule areas in their own right where there is no male heir, as we shall see). Other royal wives are 644 643 559 538 the daughters of district heads, while a number are daughters of foreign chiefs who come, sometimes with cattle, sometimes with money or a daughter to *loba* the queen for rain. Once a [582] woman from within the tribe has been accepted by the queen as a royal wife, the tie is renewed from generation to generation [634] on the pattern of cross-cousin marriage. Men may offer a daughter to the queen also in return for, or in the expectation of, economic help or political favour (though these are not always accepted) and there is a tendency today for districts to be subdivided into smaller and smaller units to satisfy the political aspirations of ambitious subjects. Royal wives bind to the queen not only her closest relatives but most of the important people in the tribe. Some wives are given away in marriage to her councillors, relatives and district headmen. [836] Some remain with her and have allocated lovers. Children of [602] these latter call the queen 'father' and she is responsible for helping them to marry.

563 613 The Lobedu proper appear originally to have regarded themselves as an aristocracy but today it is only the royal lineage (*ba Mohale*) and a number of important Lobedu district heads that are looked up to. Many non-Lobedu lineages have, by virtue of marriage links through royal wives, a higher status and are more closely related to the queen than sections of Lobedu themselves.

[1] For a general account of the Lobedu, see Krige, E. J. 1941, Krige, E. J. and J. D., 1945 and 1950, and Krige, J. D., 1939.

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ance against future want by building up relations of friendship and goodwill with kin and neighbours whom you can call upon for assistance in time of need. Nor does property, as in Western society, command the services of others to any appreciable extent. The core of helpers in a work-party are there primarily because of ties of kinship and neighbourhood; the beer that is served may be enjoyed by any passer-by who wishes to join in. Traditionally, then, property is of value to the Lobedu only in so far as it can be consumed or meets an immediate need on the one hand or, on the other, is used for creating and maintaining social relationships. This is changing now under conditions of culture contact but the change is still largely confined to Christians.

There is not a great deal of exchange and what there is takes the form most frequently of gift exchange[1]. Property in the form of a gift is a tangible sign of a social relationship. A new bride speaks to no one in her new homestead until given a small gift in token of her new social relationship to the giver and the same holds for a newly-initiated boy or girl. Ties with one's maternal kin and with affines are also kept alive by gifts and gift-exchange. It is significant that agnatic ties are the only ones that do not require continuous gift-exchange. Yet even here a service rendered seldom goes unrewarded. Property and human relationships are, then, closely interlinked. That it is not possible always to separate economic and social relationship among the Lobedu is shown by the following examples. Just after the 1895 rinderpest Khidima, a royal relative, went to the queen, who is traditionally responsible for giving succour to orphans and the needy, to ask for money to buy mealies. She gave him some. A few years later he sent a messenger to her to say he 'had a baby daughter'. The queen accepted the gift and when the girl reached puberty presented her with a *theri* goat according to custom. Cattle followed and the girl, Myakwane, was duly 'married' by the queen. This was the beginning of a permanent bride-giving-bride-receiving relationship, for in 1950 the queen sent a messenger to the widow of Myakwane's brother who had used his sister's cattle, to ask for her daughter in marriage. *'Ge loda dikhomo tja ka. Ge nyaga mesadi a de a nthidela*—I am following the tracks of my cattle.

[1] Krige, E. J., 1941.

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I want a wife to come and stamp for me', said the queen. The girl was married by the queen and shortly after was given to the son of another 'wife' (*motanoni*) of the queen with whom she is now living at the Capital.

Sometimes the transaction takes on more of an economic character, a man pledging his daughter in order to receive economic help. Thus Jim's father in a period of starvation took his ten-year-old daughter to a man at Malemacha and said, 'I am starving and poor. Give me money. I have a girl, a *ledolo*'. Money was given to him and later when the girl was sent in marriage, cattle were handed over in the usual way. More commonly this technique was used when a man had no sister whose cattle he might use to marry with. He then went to a maternal or affinal relative or to a friend or even a stranger who had cattle, saying: '*Ge no khuru*—I have a knee', in reference to his procreative powers, thus pledging himself to send an as yet unborn daughter in marriage. Today such transactions have become infrequent since money can so easily be obtained by migrant labour or a loan can be repaid in money without having to pledge a daughter.

The cattle or other property (marriage hoes were used in the old days)[1] establish tangible obligations between the two families which can be upheld at law even though the contract is fulfilled only in the next generation or later. Moreover the bond is permanent: other marriages will follow the first from generation to generation in a manner that will be described below. The use of women in property transactions of this kind which is not considered to be derogatory by the Lobedu is all the more remarkable in the light of the very high position of, and the power wielded by, women in Lobedu social life.

Some Aspects of Marriage

It will be necessary before discussing the domestic cycle to examine briefly the nature of Lobedu marriage; for not only does marriage establish strong economic and social relation-

[1] These hoes were to › large and heavy for tilling the soil and were merely kept in a hut. The chief councillor of the queen, a man of about eighty years old, still remembers the use of marriage hoes in a few cases in his boyhood. Six hoes or eight head of cattle passed in marriage at that time.

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the court cases. Later, when the heir came of age, a new homestead was built. When Mabulana died in the 1940's his daughter, a married woman who does not live in the area was made official district head. Her mother's brother came specially from the Capital to live in the area and help her by conducting cases.

The mother's brother is considered to be eminently suitable as adviser to a ruler. The queen, too, traditionally has a mother's brother as chief councillor. A mother's brother has no claim to succession yet is deeply interested in the welfare of his sister's child. He will see to it that the sister's child gets his rights. The position of the son of the *khadi* who is acting as regent is somewhat different. There is a Lobedu proverb saying '*Bya thoga monye bo dula mudukulu*—where a master is lacking there sits the nephew'. And it is true that the son of a woman regent is often ruler in all but name. In the 1930's there were two blatant cases in which the rightful heirs of district heads who had long reached man's estate seemed in danger of permanently being ousted. In both cases in the long run when the *khadi* died the rightful heir was installed, in one of the cases on the expressed dying wish of the *khadi*. Right seems to prevail in the long run.

The Homestead Through Time

Basically a homestead consists of a group of 'houses' belonging to the wives of the head or of the head and his half-brothers. Other relatives may attach themselves to it but the core remains the group of agnates.

Many of the smaller homesteads that have all the appearance of being independent are found upon investigation to be portions (a 'house') of a neighbouring homestead, which has become separated in space but still considers itself part and acknowledges the authority and control of the senior homestead near by. The most obvious case of this arises where, owing to quarrels between co-wives, a husband has placed one of the wives in a homestead of her own and visits her there. If a wife has a married son then in the event of serious quarrels there is more likely to be a hiving off, the son moving to a different area with his mother and siblings.

In Figure 5 a very small homestead is shown. Here the